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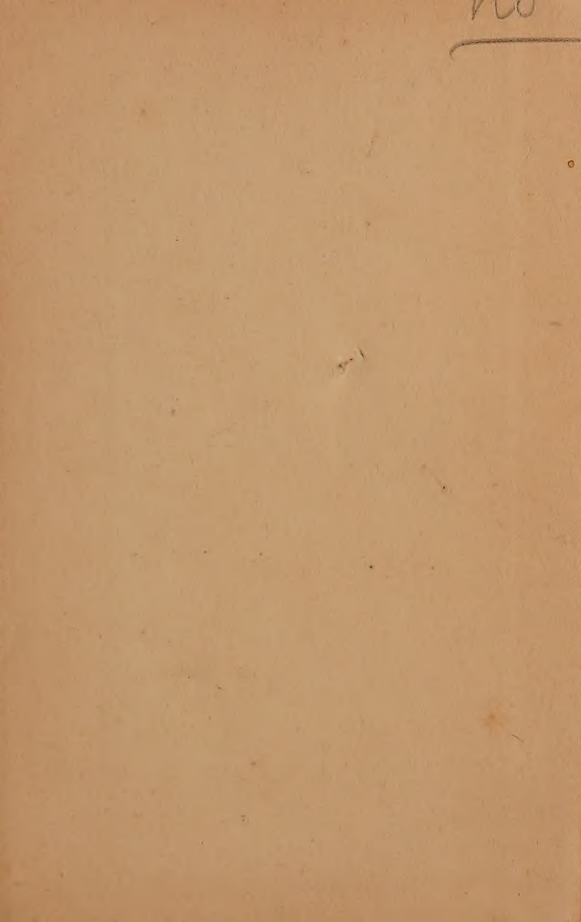
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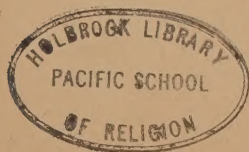


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EXTRACTS
FROM THE
SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE
OF
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
CONFIRMED BY HIS EXAMPLE



EXTRACTS

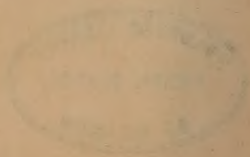
FROM THE

PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINE

OF

THE ARTS AND MANUFACTURES

OF THE UNITED STATES





S. JOANNES BAPTISTA DE LA SALLE
Cong. Fratrum Schol. Christ. Fundator.

EXTRACTS
FROM THE
SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

OF
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
CONFIRMED BY HIS EXAMPLE



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SKETCH

OF

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

St. John Baptist De La Salle was born at Rheims in France on the 30th April 1651. Although the eldest of a family distinguished in the magistracy, he desired from early youth to consecrate himself to the service of the altar, and became a canon of the Metropolitan church of Rheims at the age of seventeen. He was a seminarian at St. Sulpice, Paris, when the death of his parents obliged him to return to Rheims, where he continued his studies and took the degree of Doctor of Theology. He was ordained priest in 1678, and devoted himself entirely to good works.

Being animated with an ardent and enlightened zeal for the salvation of souls, he applied himself especially to the instruction of youth, and founded an Institute chiefly intended for the education of the people. He began community life with his first disciples on the 24th June 1681, made vows of stability and obedience with twelve of them in 1684; and, in order to give them in his own person an example of the most perfect devotedness and the most absolute disinterestedness, he resigned his canonical office and distributed his rich patrimony among the poor.

He himself taught school at Rheims, Paris, Marseilles and Grenoble; he resigned his office of Superior General in 1717, and applied himself more than ever to confirm his disciples in detachment from the world and in perfect submission to the decisions of the Church. In testimony of his sentiments on the

latter point, he added *Roman Priest* to his signature.

Finally, after having given during forty years, an example of the most heroic virtue, he died in the odour of sanctity on Good Friday, the 7th April 1719, in the house of St. Yon, Rouen, where he had established the seat of his Institute.

The holy Founder left after him twenty-two houses in which reigned the fervour he had inspired ; very soon this number was considerably increased ; there were one hundred and twenty-one at the time of the Revolution in 1789, and they numbered fifteen hundred and sixty-nine in 1904.

Louis XV., by *Letters Patent* of the 28th September 1724, granted corporate rights to the Institute ; and Benedict XIII. approved it as well as its Rules by a Bull dated the 26th January 1725.

After the Revolution, the Institute was legally re-established in France by the Decree Laws of the 3rd December 1803, and of the 17th March 1808.

The pious Founder's reputation for sanctity increased with time. In 1834, the Superiors of the Institute and the clergy of France, through the voice of the chief Pastors, began with earnest entreaties to solicit the Holy See that steps might be taken for the beatification and canonization of this apostle of youth. On the 8th May 1840, Gregory XVI. signed the decree for the introduction of the Cause ; on the 19th February 1888, Leo XIII. conferred the title of Blessed on the Servant of God ; and on the 24th May 1900, crowned him with the aureola of the Saints.

The writings of St. John Baptist De La Salle are gathered together in a volume entitled : *Doctrine Spirituelle de saint Jean Baptiste de La Salle, confirmée par ses exemples*. It is from this work that the present volume, *Extracts from the Spiritual Doctrine of St. John Baptist De La Salle*, has been taken.

EXTRACTS
FROM THE
SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE
OF
ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
CONFIRMED BY HIS EXAMPLE



I
ABANDONMENT TO PROVIDENCE

I. JESUS, MODEL OF ABANDONMENT
TO PROVIDENCE.

1. Our Lord obeyed the orders of Heaven in every point, and He wished that all He would have to do or suffer should be commanded by His heavenly Father.

Imitate this admirable example given you by Our Blessed Lord not to do anything of your own accord, but to leave it to your Superiors to regulate and order everything you have to do, even to the least details. — *Med.* 24.

2. It was the will of His Father that constituted the food of Our Lord, that is, which was the rule, and, so to speak, the soul of His conduct. Strive, after the example of Jesus Christ, your divine Master, not to wish anything but what God wishes, when He wishes and as He wishes. — *Med.* 24.

3. Jesus Christ abandoned Himself to the will of His Father to suffer and to die when and in the manner pleasing to Him : hence when He prayed in the garden of Olives in order to prepare for His passion and death, which He foresaw and which was near at hand, He protested that whatever repugnance He had for sufferings and death, His heavenly Father should not have regard to His will. He resigned Himself entirely on this occasion to that of His Father as He had always done during His life : having come into this world, as He expresses it in various places in the Gospel, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.

O amiable abandonment of the human will of Jesus, submissive in all things to the divine will, and having no impulse either for life, or death, or the time or manner of the torture under which He was to expire, except that with which His heavenly Father inspired Him !

Make yourselves disciples of Jesus Christ in this respect, so that you may never have any will but that of God. — *Med.* 24.

II. ADVANTAGES OF ABANDONMENT TO PROVIDENCE.

1. The more we abandon ourselves to Providence, the more attentive it is not to leave us in want of anything. — *Med.* 59.

2. Our Blessed Lord will provide you with everything necessary, if you think only of sanctifying yourself and acquitting yourself well of the duties of your state; it was for this reason that He said to St. Catherine of Sienna that she should think of Him and He would think of her. — *Med.* 59.

3. Have you so little faith as to fear that in acquitting yourselves of your duty and applying yourselves only to make God reign in your hearts and in the hearts of others, you may be in want of what is necessary to feed and clothe you? — *Med.* 67.

4. You, who in your state perform the work of God, rest assured that He will take care of you, provided you serve Him with fidelity, and omit nothing of what He requires of you. — *Med.* 59.

5. When, in your trials, you have had recourse to those who conduct you, and when they have not been able to apply a suitable remedy, God then wishes you to remain entirely submissive to His guidance, awaiting from Him and solely from His goodness all the help you stand in need of. — *Med.* 20.

6. It is the ordinary way of God to thwart

the designs of men, and to cause the contrary of what they expected to happen, so that they may learn to trust in Him and to abandon themselves entirely to His Providence, and to undertake nothing of themselves, because they should not wish for anything but what He wills. — *Med.* 23.

7. You should abandon yourself to God, either to suffer as much as He pleases, which is very advantageous to you, or to be freed from pain by such means as He shall judge to be most profitable to you, without troubling your mind in search of repose by your own efforts, which will often be in vain. — *Med.* 20.

8. Our Blessed Lord charges Himself with providing for those who have consecrated themselves entirely to Him. — *Med.* 59.

9. Our Blessed Lord has never abandoned those who apply themselves only to please Him, and who think only of following Him. — *Med.* 59.

10. God rewards the souls that give themselves perfectly to Him and that suffer much for love of Him. — *Med.* 77.

11. It usually happens that after abandoning ourselves to God, He makes us experience very extraordinary effects of His goodness and protection. — *Med.* 20.

12. Rest assured that after having placed yourself in the hands of God to suffer everything and as much as He pleases, if He leaves you suffering, He will help you by His grace,

perhaps in an insensible manner, to bear your trial, and He will relieve you by unforeseen means and when you least expect it. — *Med.* 20.

13. Men of little faith, by your want of confidence you prescribe limits to a goodness that has none... You seek for assurance; but do you not find it in the Gospel? The words of Our Blessed Lord are your contract of assurance; there is nothing more binding, because He has signed it with His blood, and stamped it with the seal of His infallible truth. Why therefore do you grow distrustful? Can you believe that He to whom you are consecrating your youth and to whom you are dedicating your labours, will abandon you in your old age, and let you drag out in misery a life employed in His service? — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. I, Chap. XI.

14. Reanimate your confidence in the infinite goodness of God, and honour Him by abandoning to Him the care of your person. Without anxiety for the present or future, limit your care but to the moment you have to live, and do not burden the day which is passing with the solicitude of the morrow. What is wanting to you in the evening, will be furnished to you on the morrow, if you know how to hope in God. God will rather work miracles than let you be in want. After the words of Jesus Christ, I refer you to the experience of all the saints. The miracles of Providence are daily,

and they cease only with regard to those who are distrustful. — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. I. Chap. XI.

HEROIC ABANDONMENT OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST
DE LA SALLE TO PROVIDENCE.

We believe it right to say that abandonment to divine Providence and detachment from all things was characteristic of St. John Baptist De La Salle. These two virtues shone in him with such lustre, that they seem to have eclipsed all the others. He cast all his solitudes and those of his children into the Heart of God, and with them sheltered himself entirely in the arms of Providence.

This abandonment to Providence was, besides, always submitted to the approval of his eminent director, the Rev. Father Barré. Read the humble and submissive language in which he concludes his request to divest himself of all his goods : *I shall not divest myself of them unless you are willing ; I shall divest myself of them only as far as you are willing ; if you tell me to keep anything, should it be only five half-pence, I shall do so.*

“ Do not be uneasy about the future, he writes to a Brother ; abandon it all to God who will take care of you ; act in such a way, I pray you, in the midst of your infirmities, as to abandon yourself entirely to the guidance of God : for it belongs to Him to dispose of you as He pleases ; take care, he adds, not to allow yourself to become discouraged by your trials and sufferings ; this life is full of them ; you must, whilst you are young, dispose yourself to accept them with a good heart, and, as you have already done, follow the maxims of the Gospel in order to accept them in a becoming manner and in order to profit by them. ”

But if he insisted on resignation in physical suffering, he did not require it less in mental trials. Here is what he said to one of his Brothers who informed him how keenly he felt his trials : “ Divine Provi-

dence wishes to leave you in your actual state, my dear Brother : you must wish what it wishes and abandon yourself to it ; we are obliged to do this by our profession, and we must always adore its designs over us ; and if you desire to be relieved from this state in order to look for consolation, it is to be feared that it is your own consolation, rather than the God of consolation, that you are seeking. " — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. VI.

" I adore in all things the designs of God in my regard. " — *Last words of St. John Baptist De La Salle*.





II

ACTIONS

I. MERIT OF ACTIONS WELL PERFORMED.

1. What constitutes the merit of religious is not the quality of their actions, but the excellence of the obedience with which they perform them. It is this which should distinguish religious from seculars : the actions of the former are sanctified because they are performed by obedience, whereas those of the latter are sanctified by the merits they have in themselves. — *Med.* 11.

2. To eat, to sweep, to clean up, etc., appear little in themselves ; but when such actions are performed through obedience, they become very excellent, because they have God for their object, since God Himself is obeyed in performing them. — *Med.* 12.

3. Since obedience procures so great an advantage, act in such a manner that it may be inseparable from all your actions. Let it therefore render them worthy of God, and put you in a state of producing fruit in the souls

of those you are to lead to Him and to bring up as Christians. — *Med.* 57.

4. Your employment would be of little use, if your aim were not the salvation of souls. Have you this object in view in everything that you do? Does your zeal for the Christian education of poor children make you seek means as efficacious as were those of the saints? The more earnestly you apply yourself to mental prayer, the more facility will God give you to touch hearts, and consequently, the more good will you do for the souls entrusted to you. — *Med.* 148.

5. What constitutes the life of saints is their continual attention to God : this should also be the aim of persons consecrated to Him, and who seek only to do His holy will, to love Him and induce others to love Him. This should be your whole occupation on earth, and all your work should tend to this end.— *Med.* 67.

II. NOT TO DO ANYTHING THROUGH HUMAN MOTIVES.

1. The Brothers shall make it their chief study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive ; but they shall so act as to perform them all by the guidance of God, through the movement of His spirit,

and with the intention of pleasing Him. — *Rules, Chap. II.*

2. Do you perform your ordinary actions in a spiritual manner, having in view only God and His good pleasure, or do you not rather perform them through inclination, for form's sake, human respect, or some merely natural motive? — *Collection.*

3. Do you ever allow yourself through caprice to change or fail in following the order of the community? Do you ever dispense yourself from it without reason, of your own accord, and without permission? — *Collection.*

4. Have you not often changed the time or omitted your ordinary spiritual exercises because of the difficulty or repugnance you experienced? Reflect now whether you have not frequently allowed yourself to be deceived on this subject, and be on your guard hereafter. — *Collection.*

5. Show forth, by the conformity of your actions with the holy maxims of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you really believe them. — *Med. 84.*

6. St. Paul tells us that whatever we do, we should do it for the glory of God. It should have been for this reason alone that you withdrew from the world; for God should be the end of your actions, as He is their principle. — *Med. 90.*

7. Bear in mind, when you have anything to do, that we are happy in this world only when

we act in view of God, for His love and to please Him. — *Letters*.

8. Do you not do many things through purely human and natural motives, and because you are so inclined ? Do you do everything as being in the presence of God, as belonging to Him, and having but to please Him ? — *Med. 45*.

III. MEANS OF PERFORMING OUR ACTIONS WELL.

1. If we desire to perform our actions with the perfection that God requires of us, we must be particularly careful not to perform any thoughtlessly or with precipitation ; hence, before undertaking what is proposed, we should wait some time to consider and examine four things :

Whether the action we are about to perform be not contrary to the law of God, or offensive to Him in any way.

Whether it will not withdraw us from our duty and the obligations of our state, which we should fulfil perfectly and in preference to any other good we might accomplish.

Whether it be not contrary to the Rules of the community, or the resolutions we have taken to regulate our conduct.

Whether it be not opposed to some greater good, either for ourselves or for our neighbour.

After these short reflections, we must internally consider Our Lord Jesus Christ doing this

action, and then begin, continue and end it in union with Him, and with the view of imitating Him as perfectly as possible. — *Collection*.

2. It is particularly in your actions that your faith should appear, by performing them only through the spirit of faith, as you are obliged to do according to the spirit of the Institute. — *Med.* 147.

3. You should daily renew your offering to our Sovereign Master and consecrate all your actions to Him by doing them only for Him. — *Med.* 104.

4. Do you often think of God during your exercises and other daily actions? Are you careful to offer them to Him at the beginning, and, at the end, to thank Him for the graces He has given you? Do you beseech Him to continue His blessings, and do you ask His pardon for the faults you may have committed in performing them? — *Collection*.

5. Endeavour to perform all your actions in a prayerful spirit; this is one of the best means to sanctify them. — *Med.* 129.

6. Act in such a manner that all your actions may breathe virtue. — *Med.* 98.

IV. EXTRACTS FROM THE REGULATION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

It is a good rule of conduct not to make any distinction between the affairs peculiar to our state and the affair of our salvation and perfection, and to be

convinced that we shall never do better for our salvation or acquire more perfection than in performing the duties of our employment, provided we perform them in view of God. We must strive always to have this in view.

It is a good rule not to trouble ourselves so much to know what we are to do as to do perfectly what we know.

In the morning, I shall take a quarter of an hour to foresee what I shall have to do, in order to do it well ; to foresee the occasions in which I might fail, in order to avoid them ; and I shall take measures for my proper conduct during the whole day.

I shall endeavour to raise my heart to God as often as I shall begin any action ; and whatever I may undertake, I shall not begin without having prayed.

I shall unite my actions to those of Our Lord at least twenty times a day, and endeavour to have views and intentions conformable to His. For this purpose, I shall have a small piece of paper that I shall prick as often as I have done so : and for every time I shall have failed, I shall, before retiring, say so many *Paters*, kissing the floor after each.





III

THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

MOTIVES AND MEANS OF HELPING THEM.

1. Consider with compassion the state of these holy souls, which, without disquietude, sigh for their deliverance in order that they may soon be in the enjoyment of God: this they hope for with a firm confidence from His infinite goodness, being assured of this advantage as soon as they shall be delivered from their sufferings. — *Med.* 185.

2. It is a sort of obligation for us to pray to God frequently for the souls suffering in purgatory. First, because God who has abandoned them to His justice for as long a time as He pleases, according to their sins and the little care they took to do penance in this world, has not left them any other means after their death than their own sufferings and the suffrages of the faithful who are still in this world. These may apply to them by way of suffrage their prayers, their fasts and other penitential acts, their alms, the holy sacrifice of the Mass

and any other satisfaction whatever. Secondly, because we are united with these holy souls by an interior union, since, like ourselves, they are members of the Church and of Jesus Christ Himself; besides we are united with them in Jesus Christ by sanctifying grace, which is common to us with them. These two sorts of union should fill us with compassion for these suffering souls. — *Med.* 185.

3. We should unite with the Church as her members, and with all the faithful who are such likewise and with it form but one body, to offer to God our prayers and the holy sacrifice of the Mass, in order to obtain from God, in virtue of this intimate union and our many prayers and suffrages, the prompt deliverance of these suffering souls. In their turn, the latter may, when they shall be in glory, obtain for us many graces by their prayers, and thus help us to reach heaven. — *Med.* 185.

4. Do you pray for the souls in purgatory? The liturgical prayers appointed for this purpose are always the best. — *Collection.*





IV

THE LOVE OF GOD

I. OBLIGATION TO LOVE GOD.

1. We are in this world only to love God and please Him. This we must do all our lifetime ; for, it is the first thing that God commands and which embraces the whole law, as Our Lord tells us. — *Med.* 90.

2. Our soul being created by God only to possess Him, all its happiness in this world consists in attaching itself to Him alone. — *Med.* 90.

3. To whom are we to attach ourselves if not to Him from whom we have received everything, who alone is Our Lord and Father, *for of Him and by Him and in Him are all things.*¹ — *Med.* 90.

4. God having given you being as a gratuitous gift of His bounty, it is very just that, in order to acknowledge how much you are His, you should render Him the homage of your life, as a thing which is absolutely His, and of which you are but the custodian. — *Med.* 70.

1. Rom. XI. 36.

5. The consideration that God has made us only for Himself, and the gratitude we owe Him for all His benefits should fill our minds and engage our hearts to give ourselves entirely to Him, and to say to Him with St. Augustine : *My God, Thou hast made us for Thee alone ; and our hearts will always be in agitation until they rest in Thee.* — *Med.* 90.

6. St. Paul tells us that whatever we do, we should do *all to the glory of God.*¹ It should have been for this purpose alone that you withdrew from the world ; because it is God who should be the end of your actions, as it is He who is their principle. — *Med.* 90.

7. As to yourself who have retired from the world in order to lead a life superior to nature and human inclinations, and to labour for the salvation of your neighbour, you should not attach yourself to anything but God and the ministry with which He has honoured you ; and thus, all your care should be to occupy yourself with purely spiritual things and those which concern the Christian education of your pupils. — *Med.* 90.

8. To love aught else but God without referring it to Him, is to offer Him an injury and to prefer to Him an object which is infinitely less than He is, and all the beauty and amiability of which is but a participation of the goodness that comes from Him, as a good which belongs

1. Cor. X. 31.

to Him and which He communicates to His creature. — *Med.* 70.

II. THE MANNER OF LOVING GOD.

1. Our love of God should be so absolute as to love nothing but Him or for Him ; and this we can prove in three ways : 1. When we have the highest esteem for the perfections of God ; 2. When we attach ourselves only to Him ; 3. When we perform all our actions for Him. — *Med.* 90.

2. We should love God with our whole mind by occupying ourselves always with Him, and referring to Him all our thoughts relative to creatures, in such a manner as to think of nothing that relates to them that does not lead us to love Him or keep us in His holy love. Indeed, there is nothing that proves better that we love anyone than when we cannot help thinking of him. — *Med.* 70.

3. We should love God with our whole heart, that is, with all our affection, without reserving the least part for any creature, wishing to love Him alone, who alone is amiable, because He is the only being who is essentially good in Himself. — *Med.* 70.

4. We should love God with our whole soul, that is, we should be disposed to abandon not only all exterior and sensible things, but life itself, signified by the word soul, rather

than be deprived of His love even for a moment, because we should prefer God to everything else that might be the object of our affection. — *Med.* 70.

5. One of the best means of acquiring and preserving divine love is to suffer much and to suffer with joy. — *Med.* 95.

6. You should, for the love of God, be disposed to mortify yourself, and be willing to be mortified by others every day and every hour both interiorly and exteriorly. — *Med.* 90.

III. A CHRISTIAN TEACHER SHOULD CAUSE GOD TO BE LOVED.

1. They who have been replenished in retreat with the love of God, afterwards try to impart it to others, when, for the good of the Church, Providence places them under the obligation of communicating with the world. It is then that these men entirely penetrated with the spirit of God, apply themselves with the greatest possible care to make known to others and to make them relish what they feel in themselves; and then also, the ardent zeal with which they are animated, renders them fit to help a multitude of souls to give themselves to God. — *Med.* 171.

2. You are in an employment that requires great zeal; but this zeal would be of little use, if it did not produce any effect in the hearts of

your pupils. For this purpose, it is necessary that it be produced by the love of God dwelling in you. — *Med.* 171.

3. If you wish to render yourself worthy of being employed for the salvation of souls, be detached from everything, and the grace of God will be imparted to you in abundance, both for yourself and for others. Say as it is written in Genesis : *Give me the persons and the rest take to thyself*;¹ for, with the exception of the holy love of God and the salvation of souls, all the rest should be indifferent to you. — *Med.* 187.

4. Earnestly ask of God that nothing may make you disagreeable in His sight, because you are obliged to inculcate His love on the hearts of those whom you instruct. Is it thus you act? Is it this that you ask for in the prayers that you address to God? — *Med.* 39.

IV. THE MARKS OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

St. John Baptist De La Salle depicted himself when, speaking from the abundance of his heart, he pointed out to the Brothers the five following marks of the love of God : the first, to think of Him ; the second, to speak of Him frequently and to be pleased to hear Him spoken of ; the third, fidelity in performing one's duty and doing the will of God in all things ; the fourth, a kind heart towards everyone ; the fifth, the exercise of the love of God by frequent acts and continual aspirations towards God.

1. Gen. XIV. 21.

Divine love, jealous of the heart of man, induces him to separate from creatures, and teaches him to erect in his interior a solitude in order that he may there more surely find God and unite himself to Him with greater facility. Hence, in the Saints, that insatiable desire of prayer and meditation; and it is in this that the holy priest strove to imitate them. His life was a continual communion with God. He prayed without interruption. The verses of the psalms, so full of heavenly fire and so well calculated to kindle it in hearts, were the usual language that he used to commune with God.

The pure love of God which was his life, was also the soul of his whole conduct. God, the only object of all his desires, was the object of all his aims and intentions. He had no other end in view than to please Him, to accomplish His holy will in all things, to procure His glory, to love Him and cause Him to be loved.

Being content with serving God for God, the honour of serving so good a Master and the happiness of pleasing Him appeared to him sufficient motives to set his heart all aflame. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. VIII-IX.



V

THE ANGELS

I. ST. MICHAEL.

1. Honour St. Michael as the first who glorified God and caused Him to be glorified by creatures, and render him the honour he merited for his attachment to his Creator. Unite yourself to him and to all the other blessed spirits who accompany him in heaven, and look upon them as your models in what you should do for God. Think often of the words that animated them in their combat with the demons : *Who is like unto God?* so that they may sustain you in your temptations, and that every one of you may say to himself when he is tempted : *Is the pleasure that I might have in this attraction of concupiscence to be compared with that of possessing God?* — *Med.* 169.

2. St. Michael renders glory to God every day by the good he does to Christians and by the graces he procures for them, because, being chosen to be the protector of the Church, he

sustains and defends her against her enemies.
— *Med.* 169.

3. We cannot act more wisely than to confide the affairs of our salvation to this holy Archangel, because he will powerfully help to bring it about, having, by the order of God and through zeal for His glory, overcome and precipitated Lucifer and his adherents into hell in the beginning. — *Med.* 125.

4. Always ready to resist the devil and to help us, St. Michael does not cease to combat him by helping us to overcome the temptations he brings about. — *Med.* 125.

5. Have recourse to St. Michael, and ask him to help you in the combats which your state may oblige you to sustain, and to conduct you surely and directly to God by the way traced out for you by your Rules. Be very faithful to them, and this holy Archangel will protect you. — *Med.* 125.

6. Is it not St. Michael who, as the Church sings, has been appointed by God to receive the souls of the just when they leave their bodies, and then conduct them to heaven? It is also he who, as the beloved of God, defends the Church against schism and heresy, which, from time to time, trouble her and oppose themselves to her holy doctrine. Let us therefore unite with this worthy chief of the Angels, in order to share in his zeal for our salvation and that of all Christians; let us abandon ourselves

to his care ; let us trust in his help and be docile to his interior voice. — *Med.* 169.

7. Often pray to St. Michael to protect this little family, or according to the expression of St. Paul, this Church of God, which is our Congregation, that he may be pleased always to preserve it in the spirit of Jesus Christ, and to give all its members the necessary graces to persevere in their vocation, and obtain the spirit of Christianity for those who are entrusted to them. — *Med.* 169.

II. THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS.

1. God orders His Angels to take care of us on His behalf, to conduct and enlighten us in all our ways, so that, by their help, we may go straight to heaven, with the certainty of not going astray. — *Med.* 127.

2. In virtue of the mission they have received from God the Father of lights and of all good, the Guardian Angels are filled with zeal for the salvation of mankind, so that they contribute as far as they are able, to render them worthy of participating one day in the glory of the Saints in heaven. — *Med.* 198.

3. The help we receive from our good Angels is very great. They suggest to us many holy thoughts to lead us to God ; they excite us to do penance for our sins ; they present our prayers to God ; they pray for us, and procure

for us so many and such great favors, that it is difficult to express them all. — *Med.* 198.

4. Whenever we are attacked by any violent temptation, or when threatened with some considerable trial, let us invoke the Angel who watches over us, who conducts and who helps us so favourably in our wants and difficulties. Let us address ourselves to him by fervent and continual prayers, since he is always present, and ready to defend and console us. — *Med.* 172.

5. Be grateful to God, and show it especially by doing exactly what the holy Angels inspire. — *Med.* 172.

III. EDUCATORS SHOULD BE THE GUARDIAN ANGELS OF THEIR PUPILS.

1. Your pupils require that you should be, in their regard, visible Angels, who animate them both by instruction and example to relish and practise the maxims of the Gospel; so that by these two means, these holy maxims, making a deep impression on their minds and hearts, may become the rule of their whole conduct. — *Med.* 197.

2. You should resemble the Angels in interior and exterior purity; for, like the Angels, you should be entirely disengaged from the body and sensual pleasures, so that you may, so to speak, have only a soul. Let it

therefore alone have your care and be the end of your occupations ; for, like the Angels, God has destined you to apply yourself only to what pertains to His service and the care of souls. — *Med.* 2.

3. Often pray to the Guardian Angels of your pupils, so that under their powerful protection, they may willingly and with greater facility practise the good you teach them. — *Med.* 172.

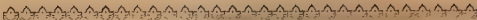
IV. DEVOTION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TO THE HOLY ANGELS.

St. John Baptist De La Salle honoured the holy Angels with a particular devotion, and especially St. Michael, their chief, as the protector of the Church, the first zelator of the glory of God and the principal adversary of Satan. He celebrated his two feasts with singular piety : he often had recourse to him in the assaults he had to sustain against the devil and the world ; and in order to induce others to do the same, he testified that he was always glad to have addressed himself to this great prince of the armies of God.

The holy priest did not honour the holy Guardian Angels less. The day on which the Church celebrates their feast was one of the most solemn for him and his Brothers, whom he called to the holy table so as to nourish themselves with lifegiving bread in the presence of these heavenly spirits. He advised them often to have recourse to the Angels in the difficulties they met with in the instruction of children, promising them sensible help on the part of these charitable friends in order to acquit themselves of a ministry in which they co-operate with them in the salvation of souls. In order to give his disciples a lofty idea of

their employment, and to inspire them with love, esteem and taste for it, he added that they themselves were the visible angels of children. For this noble reason, he exhorted them to associate themselves with these heavenly spirits, to address themselves to them with confidence, to have that respect for their presence which their excellence requires, and to listen to them with fidelity because they speak only in the name of the Lord, as we read in Holy Scripture. He wished that the Brothers should not undertake anything without asking their help and placing themselves under their protection, and this he himself observed very religiously. Indeed it happened that they preserved him from several dangers. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVII.





VI

CATECHISM

I. OBLIGATION OF A CHRISTIAN TEACHER TO TEACH CATECHISM.

1. The end of the Institute is to give a Christian education to children : and it is for this purpose the Brothers keep schools, in order that, having the children under their care from morning until evening, they may teach them how to lead good lives, by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion, inspiring them with Christian maxims, and thus giving them a suitable education. — *Rules*, Chap. I.

2. You are obliged by your employment to teach the truths of faith and their religion to your disciples. You should even consecrate yourself to this object entirely, and, if necessary, give your life in order to acquit yourself well of this duty. Do you act thus ? Are you in this generous disposition ? — *Med.* 135.

3. In default of a Christian education, children would remain all their lifetime ignorant

in mind and hard in heart with regard to things of heaven, and incapable of conceiving or relishing them. Hence the goodness of God has induced Him to provide for so imperious a want, by giving teachers to children to instruct them in all these things. — *Med.* 197.

4. Is it your chief care to instruct your children in the maxims of the Holy Gospel and the practice of the Christian virtues? Have you anything more at heart than that they love them? Do you look upon the good that you endeavour to do them as the foundation of all the virtues they will practise in after life? For, the habits of virtue cultivated in youth, finding less obstacles in corrupt nature, take deep root in the hearts of those in whom they have been formed in early youth. — *Med.* 194.

5. You will have to render an account to God on the obligation of teaching children Catechism and the maxims of the Gospel. There is not one of your pupils who should not be instructed in religion, for, this is the first reason why the Church has confided them to you. Hence you should consider yourselves as the depositories of the faith in order to communicate it; this is the talent which God has confided to you and of which He has made you the stewards. — *Med.* 61.

II. ESTEEM OF THE FUNCTIONS OF A CATECHIST AND ZEAL IN EXERCISING THEM.

1. What should engage you to have a special esteem for the instruction and Christian education of your pupils is because it is a powerful means to make them truly children of God and heirs of heaven, and because this Christian education is not only the foundation and support of their piety, but also the source of all the other good done in the Church.

Thank God for the grace He has granted you of participating, by your state, in the ministry of the holy Apostles and the principal bishops and pastors of the Church, and honour your ministry by rendering yourselves, in the words of St. Paul, *fit ministers of the New Testament*.¹ — *Med.* 199.

2. You should consider your employment as one of the most considerable and necessary in the Church, where you exercise it in the place of the pastors, fathers and mothers. — *Med.* 199.

3. You should not doubt that the grace given you in entrusting you with the instruction of children, announcing the Gospel to them and bringing them up in the spirit of Christianity, is a great gift of God. But having called you to this holy ministry, He requires of you to acquit yourself of it with an ardent zeal for the salvation of your pupils, because

1. II Cor. III. 6.

it is His work. Now, God curses him that does His work with negligence. — *Med.* 201.

4. Show by your whole conduct that you look upon yourselves as the ministers of God in the Christian education of youth, acquitting yourselves of this duty with an ardent charity and a zeal as enlightened as it is true, bearing with much patience the pains you will have to suffer, being willing to be despised and persecuted by men, and even desiring to give your life for Jesus in the exercise of your ministry.

It is the zeal with which you should be animated for the salvation of souls that should make you enter into these dispositions, and bear in mind that it is God who has called you and destined you for this employment, like labourers whom He has called to labour in His vineyard. Apply yourself to it therefore with all the affection of your heart, and as if working only for the glory of God. — *Med.* 201.

III. MEANS OF RENDERING THE TEACHING OF CATECHISM USEFUL.

1. In order to acquit yourself of this duty with as much exactitude as God requires of you, often give yourself to the spirit of Our Lord, in order to act only through Him in this work, and divested entirely of self, so that the Holy Ghost may come down on your pupils,

and that they may fully possess the spirit of Christianity. — *Med.* 195.

2. You should continually beseech Our Lord to animate your actions and especially your instructions with His divine Spirit so that they may contain the unction necessary to touch the hearts of your disciples; and as it is He that *enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world*,¹ He may enlighten their minds with His grace, and fill their hearts with His unction, in order to make them relish and practise the lessons which you give them. — *Med.* 195.

3. You must adapt your instructions to the capacity of the children, otherwise they will be useless. Therefore you must prepare yourself well to make your questions and answers understood in catechism, to explain them clearly, and to use expressions easily understood. — *Med.* 33.

4. Exhort your pupils as if God were exhorting them by your mouth, since He has destined you to announce to these young souls the truths of the Gospel, and to procure for them the means of salvation within their reach. — *Med.* 193.

5. Often pray to the Guardian Angels of your pupils, so that, under their powerful protection, they may willingly and with more fidelity practise the lessons you teach them. — *Med.* 172.

1. John I. 9.

6. Put into the first rank of your obligations that of striving to gain the hearts of your pupils ; for this is one of the principal means of inducing them to live in a Christian manner. Often reflect that in default of this means, you may drive them away from God instead of leading them to Him. — *Med.* 115.

IV. THE STUDY OF RELIGION.

1. As you are obliged daily to teach the doctrine of the holy Apostles and of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, it is your duty to study it in order to know it perfectly, and to be able by this means to make your pupils true disciples of Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 116.

2. You must make a profound study of the truths of religion, because your ignorance would be criminal, since it would produce ignorance in those who are entrusted to you. — *Med.* 153.

3. If you wish to be filled with the spirit of God, and well prepared for your employment, make your study in the books of Holy Scripture, and especially the New Testament, in order that they may serve as a rule of conduct for yourself and those whom you instruct. — *Med.* 170.

4. You are obliged to know in order to teach ; but, convince yourself that you will instruct yourself much better by meditating on

the Gospel than by learning it by heart. — *Med.* 170.

V. MODELS AND PATRONS OF CATECHISTS.

1. Jesus Christ did not content Himself with confiding to His Apostles the employment of teaching Catechism; He exercised it Himself, teaching the principal truths of our religion as recorded in a large number of places in the Gospel, and saying to His Apostles : *To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God : for therefore am I sent.*¹

Say in like manner that it is for this that Jesus Christ has sent you, and that the Church of which you are the ministers, employs you. Strive therefore to acquit yourself of this holy function with as much esteem, zeal and success as did the saints. — *Med.* 199.

2. The reason for which the great saints and doctors taught catechism was because this was the first function with which Our Lord charged the Apostles, since St. Luke relates that as soon as He had chosen them, He sent them to preach the kingdom of God.² It is also this same function which He recommended to them very expressly immediately before leaving them, saying : *Going therefore, teach ye all nations ; baptising them in the name*

1. Luke IV. 43.

2. Luke IX. 2.

*of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*¹ — *Med.* 199.

3. The first thing that St. Peter did in the temple of Jerusalem, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and which immediately converted three thousand persons to the faith of Jesus Christ, was to teach the doctrine of the Gospel. It was also the special employment of St. Paul, as appears from his discourse in the Areopagus and by those he made before Felix and Festus, as related in the *Acts of the Apostles*. He even tells the Corinthians how painful it would be to go to them without being useful in instructing and catechising them. — *Med.* 199.

4. What will help you to understand the importance of teaching the elements of religion is to reflect that the holy bishops of the primitive Church looked upon it as their principal duty, deeming it an honour themselves to teach the catechumens and new Christians, by giving them familiar instructions. — *Med.* 199.

5. St. Francis Xavier especially had so great a zeal for the instruction of children, a zeal with which he had been inspired by St. Ignatius, that he went about the streets ringing a little bell in order to bring them to catechism, and applied himself to make them learn the principal mysteries of our religion. — *Med.* 79.

1. Matt. XXVIII. 19.

VI. THE REWARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS.

1. God is so good that He does not allow the good done for Him to go unrewarded, and above all, the service rendered Him by labouring for the salvation of souls. If it be true that God so richly rewards those who have left all for Him that they receive a hundredfold even in this world, for how much greater reason, will He reward, even in this world, those who shall have laboured zealously for the spread of His kingdom. — *Med.* 207.

2. God gives to those who are tireless in working for the salvation of souls two sorts of reward even in this world, for a service which is so great and good, and which He so highly esteems : first, an abundance of graces for themselves ; secondly, a more extensive ministry and great facility in converting souls. — *Med.* 207.

3. Another reward which they receive even in this life, who work for the salvation of souls, is the consolation they often have of seeing God well served by many of those whom they have instructed ; they find therein the proof that their labour has not been in vain, but that it has been the means of saving those whom they were charged to instruct. — *Med.* 207.

4. It is a great glory for you to instruct your disciples in the truths of the Gospel purely for the love of God ; it was this thought that always

filled the Doctor of Nations with consolation, and according to his own testimony made him *exceedingly abound with joy in all his tribulation*.¹ You also should look upon it as a great reward to have the consolation of seeing that the children whom you instruct behave properly, know their religion and are pious. — *Med.* 207.

5. The perseverance of your pupils in piety cannot fail to be for you a great subject of consolation when you reflect that their edifying conduct is the fruit of their faith and of your instructions; that this renders them dear to God, and gives you reason to hope that they will be of the number of the elect. What joy to recall that they received their Christian instruction in your catechism *not as the word of men but the word of God, that worketh in you that have believed*,² as is shown visibly by the good lives they continue to lead! For this reason you may say, in the consolation you experience at their perseverance in piety, that they are your hope, your *joy and your crown*³ of glory before Our Lord Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 207.

VII. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

GIVES THE SPIRIT OF FAITH AS A MOTTO FOR CATECHISTS.

Being persuaded that the office of catechist and teacher of Christian Schools which is so necessary in

1. II Cor. VII. 4.

2. I Thess. II. 13.

3. Phil. IV. 1.

the Church, so sublime in the sight of God, so strongly recommended by the Councils and most celebrated Fathers of the Church, requires, more than any other, a lively faith in order to take up its work with zeal, to cheerfully bear with its fatigues and hardships, to persevere therein with constancy and with ever new attention, St John Baptist De La Salle gave the *spirit of faith* as a motto to all his Brothers destined for this office. And in fact, without this spirit of faith, this august function insensibly loses its honour to the eyes of flesh; and those who discharge it, seeing themselves so abject in the estimation of the world, become disheartened in their employment if their faith becomes tepid and languishing. As to those who, when devoting themselves to it, look upon themselves as the spiritual fathers of the most abandoned children, as the co-operators of Jesus Christ, as the imitators of the Apostles and great Doctors, who considered it a great honour and the principal of their duties: for these who look upon their schools as the seminaries or nurseries of the Church and State where those are brought up who are to be transplanted into the various conditions of life; as the novitiate of Christianity, where they are trained to the worship of God and the practice of religion; as asylums, refuges and places of security, where their innocence is sheltered from the corruption of the age; as holy academies, where they learn the science of salvation and the practice of the Christian virtues: they who take this view, never grow weary of their schools, but, on the contrary, they delight in them. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. II.

VIII. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TEACHES SCHOOL AT GRENOBLE.

The Brother in charge of the parochial school of St. Laurent, having by his orders undertaken a long journey for community affairs, John Baptist De La Salle took his place and applied himself to teach the children with such meekness, patience, attention and

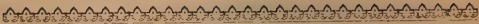
tranquillity, that all the Brothers should take him as their model in this function.

This Doctor, former Canon of Rheims, and head of a Congregation, considered it an honour, a pleasure and duty to instruct children ; to teach their A, B, C's to the youngest ; reading and writing to others, and to all, the first elements of Christian doctrine. The manner in which he did this work manifested his taste for it, and the care with which he practised the different virtues called for every moment in school.

If he made any distinction among his pupils, it was in favour of the poorest. His leaning towards them was made evident by the trouble to which he went in order to advance them in reading and writing, because he deemed this very necessary for them ; thus his humility managed to conceal his charity. His devotedness to them was also manifest in the catechism he daily taught them ; and if any among them were preferred, it was the most ignorant. These, in general, being abandoned to their natural dulness and light-headedness by teachers who were animated with but little zeal or charity, became the object of his predilection and the exercise of his patience.

God wished to reward his care and to show that meek and patient zeal works wonders and accomplishes everything ; for he finally succeeded in teaching them the truths of religion, and made them advance in reading and writing. — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. II. Chap. XI.





VII

FRATERNAL CHARITY

I. EXCELLENCE OF CHARITY.

1. Jesus Christ asked of His eternal Father the grace of union among His disciples. He desired this union to be so intimate and permanent that He compared it to that of the three Divine Persons, not in everything, as they have but one essence, but in imitation. — *Med.* 39.

2. Union is a precious stone in a community ; hence Our Blessed Lord often recommended it to His Apostles before His death ; if it is lost, everything is lost. Therefore preserve it with care, if you wish your community to be preserved. — *Med.* 91.

3. Happy they who apply themselves with all possible care to the practice of charity, because union of heart and obedience are the virtues that should exist most in a community. As we should not have entered community life nor remain in it except to animate one another to please God, we should especially

strive to be united with God, and to have but one heart and one mind. What should most animate us to act thus is, because, as St. John says : *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.*¹ — *Med.* 113.

4. God having given you the grace of living in community, there is nothing that you should more earnestly ask of Him than this union of mind and heart with your Brothers ; because it is only by means of this union that you will acquire the peace which should be the happiness of your life. Earnestly beseech the God of hearts that He may make of yours and those of your Brothers but one in that of Jesus. — *Med.* 39.

5. Act in such a manner that there may be much charity and humility among you ; it is this which will draw down the graces and blessings of God on you. — *Letters.*

6. Aversion for our neighbour and resentment of injuries prevent our prayers from ascending to God ; if our hearts are divided by anger and hatred, it is impossible to preserve union with Jesus Christ, and thus ceasing to be members of His mystical body, we cannot pretend that the Father should hear us, not recognising the spirit of His Son in us. — *Letters.*

1. I John IV. 16.

II. QUALITIES OF CHARITY.

1. *Charity is patient.*¹ St. Paul wishes that the patience which produces charity should go so far as to suffer *all*. Think well of this maxim and put it faithfully in practice. — *Med.* 65.

2. *Charity is kind.*² This is the second quality which St. Paul gives it. Indeed it is not in scolding, in murmuring, in uttering loud complaints or in quarrelling that we show love and union ; it is in speaking to one another in an affable manner, in humbling ourselves beneath our Brothers ; for as the Wise Man says : *A mild answer breaketh wrath : but a harsh word stirreth up fury.*³ It is thus that hearts are dominated and that we induce them to do all that we wish ; it is thus that those who are born with this happy disposition, or who have acquired it with the help of grace, become as masters of others and obtain their ready compliance with duty. — *Med.* 65.

3. *Charity is beneficent ;* this is the third quality which St. Paul gives it. It is also by this quality that the Samaritan in the Gospel shows the goodness of his heart. He does everything for the unfortunate traveller, whom

1. I Cor. XIII. 4.

2. I Cor. XIII. 4.

3. Prov. XV. 1.

a priest and a levite had not wished to notice. — *Med.* 65.

4. St. Paul requires charity to be *disinterested* in order to be genuine. Sometimes, however, it happens even in communities that we do good to our Brothers because we have received some favour from them, and refuse to render them a service, or at least, do not render it willingly because there is something in them that displeases us, or because they have caused us some pain or annoyance. Ah ! how human such charity is ! How little Christian, and how little it deserves to be called *disinterested* ! — *Med.* 65.

5. The charity required of us supposes a patience above proof. Everybody has his faults, and we always have them with us ; therefore it is only by bearing with them mutually that peace and union can be maintained in societies even the most select. Hence St. Paul says : *Charity beareth all things*¹ ; and in order that we may be the better convinced of this, and to show that he did not say it without reflection, he uses the expression twice. — *Med.* 74.

III. THE PRACTICE OF CHARITY.

1. The Brothers shall have a cordial affection for one another. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII.

1. I Cor. XIII. 7.

2. They shall take a singular pleasure in rendering their Brothers any service. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII.

3. They shall always speak to their Brothers in a respectful manner, though without affectation or idle civilities, but with Christian and religious simplicity, without giving rise to familiarity. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII.

4. They shall always prefer their Brothers to themselves in all things, as far as the Rules and obedience allow, in view of the esteem they have for them, and of the respect they have for God residing in them. Hence, if anything is presented to all the Brothers, or to any other and themselves, and they are free to choose, they shall take that which is least, considering their Brothers far-superior to themselves. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII.

5. All the Brothers shall have as much respect for the Serving Brothers as for the School Brothers, and no one shall say anything to them or to any person about them, but what is proper and becoming; and they shall show, on every occasion, that they are truly united with them, and very grateful for their services. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII.

6. They shall speak of their Brothers but through necessity; they shall never say anything of them but what is good, and they shall not speak of them but with esteem and much respect. On all occasions and especially

when obliged to speak to persons from without, they shall, by every exterior mark, show the respect, and the sincere, true and interior union they have with their Brothers, and they shall never let it appear by gesture or word, that they are displeased with any of them. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII.

7. The reason why there is sometimes but little union in a community is because there are some who wish to raise themselves above others through some human consideration. — *Med.* 91.

8. Perhaps you have not sufficiently reflected on the obligation under which you are of being well united with your Brothers; and yet this is one of the principal duties of your state, because you are all Brothers, as Our Lord says in the Gospel. — *Med.* 91.

9. Do you make but one with your Brothers? Do you speak to them and treat them with charity? Do you yield to your repugnance and antipathy? Penetrate yourself well with this truth, that above all in religious communities, we should revive the sentiments of the primitive Christians, who *had but one heart and one soul*.¹ — *Med.* 113.

10. Never complain of others without necessity; and when you are obliged to do so, let it not be in the form of complaint. — *Letters*.

1. Acts. IV. 32.

11. Be careful to be cordial towards everybody, to speak with much meekness and deference, proposing to yourself the manner of speaking and answering of Our Lord when He was most maltreated. — *Letters*.

IV. THE CHARITY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TOWARDS HIS BROTHERS.

He tenderly cherished all his Brothers and manifested the greatest affection towards those who appeared the least agreeable. He was always willing to listen to them in order to give them the advice they needed and console them in their afflictions. Even his most pressing occupations did not prevent him from giving them this satisfaction. This great kindness produced excellent fruits : for it sufficed for anyone on the point of abandoning his vocation to have heard his sweet and persuasive words, to make him enter into himself and then advance with rapid strides in the way of justice.

He did his utmost to have among them *but one heart and one soul*,¹ as was said of the primitive Christians. In order to attain this end, he endeavoured to enter into their views, taking pleasure in listening to their reasons and adopting their sentiments as far as conscience would allow. Being an enemy to contentions and vain disputes, he was never seen to sustain his views with warmth. He was not like those who want to enforce theirs on others. Never was anyone more careful to act in concert with others than he was with those whom God had associated with him in the same work. He cheerfully accommodated himself to their wishes and divested himself of his own. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XVIII.

1. Acts. IV. 32.

V. THE NAME OF BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS TAKEN BY
THE DISCIPLES OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

The change of habit introduced the change of name. That of *Brothers* being the most suitable, was that which was taken, and the name of *schoolmasters* was left to those who performed the function for their own profit: it did not harmonize with humility and charity; it would never have been suitable to men who professed to keep school only for the promotion of the reign of Jesus Christ and to teach the Christian doctrine gratuitously. If it could be tolerated until then in a house where uniformity and equality in all things could not as yet bind together subjects wavering in their vocation, this was no longer the case, since they had come together in order to form but one body. Consequently, the title of Brothers, which nature gives to children who have the same father on earth and which charity adopts for those who have the same spirit and the same Father in heaven, belonged to them. In this way, the name of Brothers of the Christian and gratuitous Schools became the title of the children of St. John Baptist De La Salle. This name intimates that charity, which gave birth to their Institute, should be its soul and its life; that it should preside over all their deliberations and inspire all their designs; that it should actuate them, regulate all their steps and animate all their words and works. This name teaches them the excellence of their employment, the dignity of their state and the holiness of their profession. It tells them that, being Brothers, they owe one another marks of a tender but spiritual friendship; and that, as they should consider themselves as the elder Brothers of those who come to receive their lessons they should exercise this ministry of charity with a charitable heart. — Blain, Bk. II.



VIII

CHASTITY

I. EXCELLENCE OF CHASTITY.

1. The first and principal obligation of the Brothers with regard to their exterior, shall be to make chastity shine forth above all other virtues. — *Rules*, Chap. XX. 2.

2. You should resemble the Angels in interior and exterior purity ; for, like the Angels, you should be entirely disengaged from the body and pleasures of the senses, so that there may be, as it were, nothing of you but your soul. Let it alone therefore have your care and be the end of your occupations ; for, like the holy Angels, you are destined by God only for what regards His service and the care of souls. — *Med.* 2.

3. You are in a state in which you need to be honoured with the friendship of Jesus ; cherish purity in a special manner, for it is the favourite virtue of Our divine Lord, so that He may love you tenderly and take pleasure in being with you ; for His delight is to be with pure souls. — *Med.* 88.

II. NECESSITY OF CHASTITY.

1. As this virtue is absolutely necessary for you in your state, make use of all the means given you to preserve it intact. Those which will help you most powerfully are dread of the world and very great recollection. Strive to practise them with all possible care. — *Med.* 129.

2. If you wish to possess purity such as your state requires, watch so well over your senses, that if possible, you may never lose control over them. This is one of the principal means you have of mortifying yourself, and one of the most suitable to your vocation. — *Med.* 101.

3. If you wish to be as pure as your state requires, mortify your mind and senses, and keep them under control, so as to use them only according to the order and will of God ; above all, dread familiarity with women, and speak to them only when necessary. — *Med.* 111.

4. If we disengage ourselves entirely from the senses, we shall lead a heavenly life on earth, and as our body will have acquired a sort of incorruptibility, it will, although dead, always be living before God by the transformation operated by grace. Beseech the Most Blessed Virgin to obtain for you the favour, that your body, participating in the life of the

soul by the mortification of the senses, may relish nothing earthly, and may live, so to speak, as if it were in heaven. — *Med.* 156.

III. MEANS OF PRESERVING CHASTITY.

1. You shall keep yourself chaste by profound recollection. — *Rules*, Chap. XVI.

2. The principal means of acquiring and preserving chastity are to flee from the first attacks of the impure spirit, and to do great violence to ourselves to gain the victory on all occasions and in whatever temptation. It is this that obtained many graces and eminent chastity for a number of saints. — *Med.* 129.

3. The Apostle tells us : *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*,¹ and not according to the senses. Are you careful to do this ? Do you act in such a way as to master your senses ? If you yield to them, it will subsequently be very difficult to control them. Watch therefore continually over them, because one cannot at the same time be sensual and Christian. — *Med.* 95.

4. An austere and penitent life is the guardian of chastity and disposes the soul for friendship with God ; for, disengaging the soul

1. Gal. V. 25.

from the body and sensual pleasures, it renders the soul capable of applying itself to God and receiving His light; moreover, it removes all obstacles that might prevent it from possessing the spirit of God. — *Med.* 80.

5. As the hand cannot touch pitch without being soiled, stir up ashes without getting dusty, touch fire without being burnt, so it is not possible to speak of the vice opposed to chastity, which is dangerous even in its name and thought, without leaving the mind impressed with pernicious ideas. It is easier to forget it altogether than recall it without peril. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. V.

6. It was by heroic acts, by generous resistance and by a holy violence when tempted, that the saints acquired the virtue of purity, and it is the same means we should employ in order to preserve it. — *Med.* 158.

7. Wage war against your body, mortify your flesh, and you will be victorious in the battles against the impure spirit; you will free yourself, with time and perseverance, from his assaults and all the instincts of nature which furnish him with arms to attack you. Between a sensual and unmortified body and this vice, the connection is infallible. The attraction of pleasure becomes blunted by the feeling of pain, and a body that groans under the weight of austerity, loses even the idea of voluptuousness. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. V.

8. The more we are in pain and tempted, the more we should have recourse to Communion, which is a sure remedy for alleviating our pains and weakening our temptations. — *Med. 51.*

9. The grace of the Holy Eucharist is to nourish our souls and prevent them from falling into temptation. — *Med. 53.*

10. How happy you are who are devout to the Most Blessed Virgin, to have the facility of having recourse to her holy name, and by its sole invocation to be in security in the midst of all the obstacles of so difficult a road as that of our life here below ! — *Med. 164.*

11. Beseech the Most Blessed Virgin to obtain for you this favour, that your body, participating in the life of the soul by the mortification of the senses, may no longer relish anything in this world, but live, in a way, as if it were in heaven. — *Med. 156.*

IV. LOVE AND ESTEEM OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR CHASTITY, AND THE CARE HE TOOK TO PRESERVE IT.

The love and esteem St. John Baptist De La Salle had for the beautiful virtue of chastity and the means he took to augment its lustre could hardly be cultivated with more care.

In a matter in which faults having this vice for their direct object are never light, in which the punishments are never mediocre, in which the surprises and snares are never rare, he believed that the

precautions could not be excessive. Therefore, during his whole lifetime, he was most scrupulous and diligent to remove everything that might imperil the angelic virtue.

As a child, as a student, before as well as after his consecration to the service of the altar, St. John Baptist De La Salle was always full of zeal for purity. At every period and in all the different situations of life, he was an example of this virtue. Being an enemy of scruples in other matters, he did not fear to be scrupulous in this. At least he acted in this regard as if he had been scrupulous, and as if he believed he saw a danger of sin in everything that could proximately or remotely, directly or indirectly, tarnish this virtue.

The great love and esteem of the holy priest for a virtue which the Holy Ghost Himself extols in these words : *No price is worthy of a continent soul*,¹ for a virtue which is so pleasing to Our Lord that He calls Himself the Spouse of pure souls, inspired him with great horror for all faults that wound it, and made him avoid them with the greatest fidelity, because he believed them all great or dangerous.

He watched over his senses without ceasing and omitted nothing to control them, being convinced that giving them too much liberty is a continual source of temptation, and that it does not fail to arouse concupiscence and corrupt purity ; he crucified his flesh with its vices and concupiscences so much, that at the hour of death, he could reproach himself like so many other saints, with having been severe with it to excess. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. V.

1. Ecclus. XXVI. 20.





IX

HEAVEN

I. THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN AND THE SPECIAL REWARD OF CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.

1. The happiness of heaven is something so great and so much above the ideas of men, that St. Paul, when speaking of it, says : *That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him.*¹ *This, he says, is the wisdom of God which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory.*²

And indeed, this eternal Wisdom, which is in itself full of glory and majesty, and which constitutes the glory and happiness of the saints, is hidden from us in this life and is known to us only by faith ; it is in heaven alone that we shall see God without a veil. St. John says : *We know that when he shall appear,*

1. 1 Cor. II. 9.

2. 1 Cor. II. 7.

*we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is.*¹

2. What happiness for the saints to be made like to God by a participation in His nature and divine perfections ! It is in heaven that God is truly in His saints by an intimate communication of all that is great, and that the saints are in God because their being is entirely penetrated with God, and because they can only think of Him and love Him. — *Med.* 183.

3. With regard to those who have laboured for the salvation of souls, St. Paul tells us : *Every man's work shall be manifest : for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire : and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.*² The work of those who shall have instructed children and trained them to piety shall especially be very clearly manifested ; for it will then be seen who it was that trained them to the spirit of Christianity, and solid piety. St. Paul again says : *If any man's work abide,... he shall receive a reward ;*³ that is, he whose disciples shall have acquired persevering piety through his care, shall be rewarded in proportion to his labour. — *Med.* 208.

4. Consider that your reward in heaven will

1. I John. III. 2.

2. I Cor. III. 13.

3. I Cor. III. 14.

be so much greater, as you shall have laboured more to produce fruit in the souls of the children confided to your care. It was in these sentiments that St. Paul said to the Corinthians : *As also you have known us in part, that we are your glory, as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*¹ You may say the same thing of your disciples, namely : that in the day of judgment they will be your glory if you instructed them well, and if they profited by your instructions ; because the zeal you have displayed in these instructions, and the profit your pupils have derived from them, will be manifested before the whole world. And thus you will receive glory, not only on that day, but also during all eternity, for having instructed children, and because the glory you have procured for them will redound to you. — *Med.* 208.

5. How consoling it will be for those who have saved souls to see a large number of them in heaven whom they have helped to attain so great a happiness ! This will be the case with those who have taught the truths of salvation to many, as the prophet Daniel announced : *They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.*² They shall shine in the midst of those whom they have instructed ; for these shall, through all eternity, testify their great gratitude for so many in-

1. II Cor. I. 14.

2. Dan. XII. 3.

structions received from them, looking upon them after God, as the cause of their salvation. — *Med.* 208.

6. Oh ! what joy shall not a Brother of the Christian Schools experience, when he shall see a large number of his pupils in possession of eternal happiness, for which they shall be indebted to him, through the grace of Jesus Christ ! What correspondence shall there not be between the joy of the master and that of his disciples ! What special union shall there not be in God between them ! It shall be a great satisfaction for them to converse upon the reward which their vocation from God has made them hope for, *and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* ¹ — *Med.* 208.

7. King David said : *Thou shalt fill me with joy with thy countenance ; at thy right hand are delights even to the end,*² because in heaven, the sight of God occupies the soul in such a manner, that it is no longer in possession of itself, being, so to speak, absorbed in this divine object. It is this happiness that they particularly will possess who shall have procured the salvation of souls, and who shall have devoted themselves thereto in a manner advantageous to the Church by contributing to make many of their disciples regain their

1. Ephes. I. 18.

2. Ps. XV. 11.

innocence, and procuring the means of its preservation for others, and thus preventing the devil from ever making them lose it.

This glory will be the portion of those who shall have performed the office of guardian angels with regard to the children confided to them by Providence, who shall, with constancy, have exercised an ardent zeal for their employment, and thus contributed to save a large number. — *Med.* 208.

8. Oh ! what joy shall not be yours when you hear those whom you have conducted to heaven, as if by the hand, say to you on the day of judgment, and in heaven during all eternity, what a young woman possessed of the devil and whom St. Paul delivered, said of him and those who accompanied him : *These men are the servants of the most high God, who preached unto you the way of salvation !* ¹ These saved souls will thus recall the good you have done them : some will present to Our Lord their robe of innocence which you have helped them to preserve in all its whiteness ; others who after their sins, shall by your care, have washed theirs in the blood of the Lamb, will represent to Him the pains that you took to bring them back into the way of salvation ; all will unite their voices to obtain for you a favourable judgment from Our Lord,

beseeking Him not to delay placing you in possession of a happiness which by your care and exertions you have helped them to attain. — *Med.* 208.

9. Oh ! what glory for those who shall have instructed youth, when their zeal and application to procure the salvation of children shall be published before all mankind, and heaven resound with the thanksgiving which these blessed children shall render to those who shall have taught them the way to heaven !

Act therefore in such a way, by your good and pious conduct towards those who are confided to you, as to procure for yourself all these advantages and the possession of unspeakable glory. — *Med.* 208.

II. MEANS OF REACHING HEAVEN.

1. Make use of the means which God gives you to reach heaven, otherwise you will soon lose the spirit of your state, and in spite of being called to it, you will not be numbered among the elect of God. — *Med.* 72.

2. What blindness to wish to be honoured among the saints in heaven, but to live unlike them in this world ; to have none but earthly thoughts ; not to know how to distinguish that which is precious from that which is vile, so that you seek only the honours and pleasures of this world ! Is not this a matter

for astonishment and pity at the same time ?
— *Med.* 184.

3. You have withdrawn from the world ; you should therefore be entirely detached from all human inclinations which only drag you down to earth ; you should think only of heaven to which your heart should always be raised, because you are made only for heaven, and you will find perfect rest only in heaven.
— *Med.* 40.

4. Put yourself in such a state by the exact performance of your duties, that immediately after your death you may enter heaven, and that you may also see your disciples possess it with you after their death. — *Med.* 208.

III. ZEAL OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR HIS OWN SANCTIFICATION AND THAT OF HIS DISCIPLES.

St. John Baptist De La Salle thought only of advancing his disciples toward heaven and of making progress in the same road himself. Being occupied solely with their sanctification and his own, he did not trouble himself about the rest, nor give it any more thought than the dead buried in their graves. Everything in him led efficaciously to the highest virtue : humility, meekness, mortification, penance, charity, recollection, interior life, the spirit of meditation, the practice of poverty and deprivation — these virtues shone in all his actions. He taught them even unconsciously and preached them by continual practice. It sufficed for the Brothers to look at him to be animated with fervour. Always at their head in the most humble offices and in those most repugnant to nature, he taught them by his example, that we do

things with joy when we do them for the love of God.

His whole desire was to make of them new men who would not have any thought but of God and His service : men raised above all earthly things and themselves. This is what he said one day by the agreeable reply he made to a person who advised him to make some of his Brothers breathe the air of their native country to get some relief in their infirmities : *The native country of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is Paradise.*

St. John Baptist De La Salle neglected nothing for the relief and cure of the sick Brothers ; but when it pleased God to call them, his tranquil countenance seemed to say that he was assured of their happiness. As he knew them thoroughly, and as nothing in their interior was hidden from him, he saw, without revelation, by the principles of faith, that souls so pure and hearts so devoted to God were united to the Sovereign Good, and already in possession of their last end, or at least, that they were not far from it.

This good Father, happy to see such children, had no sighs nor tears for their death, when he was present or when he received the news ; thanksgiving to God was the tribute he owed them and which he immediately rendered them : *Let us give thanks to God* he said, *here is another in heaven.* — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. II. Chap. XII.





X

COMMUNITY

I. SOME VIRTUES TO BE PRACTISED IN COMMUNITY LIFE.

1. As we should not have come into community nor remain in it except to sanctify ourselves and others, we should especially endeavour to be united in God, and have but one heart and one soul. What should induce us to act thus is what St. John says : *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.*¹ — *Med.* 113.

2. Union of heart and obedience are the virtues that should be most prominent in community. — *Med.* 113.

3. We cannot be saved without the grace of our state, and that of a person living in community being obedience, our whole care should be to possess it as perfectly as possible. — *Med.* 7.

4. As long as submission reigns in a community, God will bless it. — *Letters.*

1. I John. IV. 16.

5. Union in a community is a precious stone; hence Our Lord frequently recommended it to His Apostles before His death; if it be lost, then all is lost. Hence you must carefully preserve it, if you wish your community to be kept up. — *Med.* 91.

6. Act in such a manner that there may be much charity and humility among you; this will draw down the graces and blessings of God on you. — *Letters.*

7 They shall take singular pleasure in rendering their Brothers any service; they shall not do so, however, without the permission and the order of the Brother Director, except in a pressing necessity. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII. 2.

8. Be careful to act kindly towards everyone, to speak with great meekness and deference, bearing in mind how Our Lord spoke and answered when He was most cruelly treated. — *Letters.*

9. It is by meekness that we succeed in preserving mutual charity. Never therefore speak to your Brothers except with meekness, and keep silent when you fear to speak otherwise. — *Med.* 65.

10. Accommodate yourself through a charitable condescension to all the weaknesses of your neighbour; especially make it a rule to reserve your views on many indifferent things. — *Letters.*

11. You should daily look for occasions to render service to him against whom you may have any antipathy. After examining yourself on this subject every morning, take resolutions that you will faithfully carry out with meekness and humility. — *Letters*.

12. You should, through zeal for discipline, so much contribute to establish and maintain regularity in your community, that it may become a terrestrial paradise, where charity and peace dwell. — *Med.* 81.

13. Let us, who are aware of the miseries of the world, and who know but too well, by fatal experience, how rarely innocence and purity are preserved, thank God every day for the signal favour He has granted us in withdrawing us from it, and let us endeavour to render our lives innocent by retirement, by penance and by the holiness of our actions. Let us strive to merit perseverance in so holy a state; for this purpose, let us be faithful to the least community practices, and the smallest points of regularity. It is thus that we shall repair the injury that the world, from which we have happily retired, may have caused to our conscience, and that we shall place ourselves in a kind of security of never again sinning during the rest of our lives. — *Med.* 89.

14. Beg of God always to preserve His Spirit in your community, and often say to Him with David : *Cast me not away from Thy face,*

*and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*¹ — *Med.* 77.

II. ADVANTAGES OF COMMUNITY LIFE.

1. No one can doubt that a religious house is a holy place, and we may say of a community in which God is well served, what Jacob says in Genesis, that *the Lord is in this place*, and that *it is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven.*²

If we look upon its institution and end, we may also say of it what is said of the temple built by Solomon : *For, I have chosen, and have sanctified this place, that my name may be there forever.*³ And indeed He is often invoked in a community, and those who live there, are assembled only to sanctify themselves and save their souls. The place thus becomes for them the gate of heaven, because it makes them take the road that leads thereto and prepares them to enter. — *Med.* 77.

2. It is especially in religious communities that good example prevails most, in which it has most force and the most happy results. And indeed, those who live in community animate one another to practise what is most perfect in the maxims of the Gospel; what one does, the other would be ashamed not to

1. Ps. L. 13.

2. Gen. XXVIII. 16. 17.

3. II Paral. VII. 16.

do ; for, according to the axiom of philosophers, the love and practice of what is good is easily communicated by example to those who have a little good will to execute it. *Let everyone animate himself to do good through the example of his most fervent Brothers, and who most possess the spirit of the Institute.* — *Med.* 180.

III. THE OBLIGATION OF SANCTIFYING OURSELVES IN COMMUNITY.

1. Your sanctification is the first object you should have had in view when you entered and which should retain you in this community ; it is for this reason that we live retired from the world and oblige ourselves to all sorts of exercises of piety. How foolish it would have been to have come for any other end, since, as the prophet says : *Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord.* ¹ As He is infinitely holy, it is just that those who dwell therein should become holy by participating in His holiness. — *Med.* 77.

2. Have you come into this community as the house of Our Lord ? Have you come here to sanctify yourself ? Is it your chief care to become a saint ? Often reflect on what St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons says, that dwelling in a holy house is the source of sovereign perfection or absolute damnation. — *Med.* 77.

1. Ps. XCII. 5.

3. Notwithstanding the disorders which may occur in a community, God always has there faithful servants who preserve its spirit. He always keeps for Himself some, as He said to Elias : *Whose knees have not been bowed before Baal,*¹ that is, who are on their guard against the spirit of the world, and who observe the Rules and practices of their Institute as well as possible. It is they who still keep up the fear of the Lord, and it is because of them that God does not destroy these communities, as He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, which would have escaped the terrible effects of His anger, if there had been found there even ten just souls, as He said to Abraham. It is to those that Jesus Christ says in the Gospel, that they should *flee to the mountains,*² that is, raise their hearts to God in prayer, and separate from the company of the others in order not to share in their disorders and go to ruin by the contagion of bad example. — *Med. 77.*

4. Having the happiness of being in the house of God in whose service you have engaged yourself, you must : 1. Replenish yourself with grace by the holy exercise of mental prayer ; 2. You must endeavour to practise the virtues most suitable to your state. It is by these two means that you will render yourself capable of acquitting yourself well of your

1. III Kings. XVIV. 18.

2. Luke. XXI. 21.

duty. Be convinced that you will not acquit yourself of it as God requires of you but inasmuch as you are very faithful and assiduous in meditation, for it is through it that the Holy Ghost will come upon you and teach you, as Our Lord promised His Apostles, all the truths of religion and maxims of Christianity, which you should know and practise very perfectly, being obliged to inculcate them on others. — *Med.* 191.

5. We may well say to some who live in community what Our Lord said to those who bought and sold in the temple : *My house shall be called the house of prayer ; but you have made it a den of thieves,*¹ because as they should have entered it only to apply themselves to meditation and other exercises of piety, they neglect all these holy actions and are filled only with exterior and profane things. They take up the spirit of the world ; then they become irregular, and often, unless they change conduct, they fall into considerable sins. It is of such that it may be said that they introduce the abomination of desolation into the holy place. And, is it not an abomination when irregularity and sin are in a house which should be under the guidance of the spirit of God alone ? And when persons who should breathe but God and think only of pleasing Him, because they are consecrated to

1. Matt. XXI. 13.

His service, neglect or abandon Him entirely through distaste, in order to satisfy their inclinations or even their passions, what desolation is there not to be found then in a community, since there is no union, no peace where God is not? Those who act thus are real thieves according to the expression of Our Lord in the Gospel, because they steal the bread they eat, and occupy the places of others, who would live according to the spirit and Rules of this community. Be careful that this misfortune may not befall you. — *Med.* 77.

IV. THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

He did everything possible that there might be between himself and his Brothers *but one heart and one soul*.¹ In order to attain this end, he took pleasure in listening to their reasons and conforming to their views as far as he could conscientiously do so. Never did anyone do more than he to act in concert with others, than he did with those who associated with him in his work.

Being a friend of peace and concord, he was extremely careful to keep up and develop this spirit among the Brothers.

There was never any distinction between himself and them other than that of his pre-eminent virtue.

He was at their head at all the exercises, always the last to retire and the first to rise.

Besides, all regarded him as one come down from heaven, and who, living in a mortal body and like an angel, showed esteem only for perfect virtue. He never spoke but to recommend its practice, and he made himself a model in all his actions. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chaps. XVI, XVIII.

1. Acts. IV. 32.



XI

HOLY COMMUNION

I. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE INVITES US TO FREQUENT AND EVEN DAILY COM- MUNION.

1. The primitive Christians were accustomed to communicate daily, and this practice was long kept up in the Church ; those especially who assisted at Mass never failed to do so. A number of the Fathers of the Church prove that this was conformable to the designs of Our Lord in the institution of the Holy Eucharist, when they apply these words of the Lord's Prayer, *our daily bread*,¹ to the Body of Jesus Christ which we receive in Communion, and which they look upon as the *bread with which we should daily nourish our souls*. The soul needs to be nourished and strengthened as well as the body, otherwise it will not be able to keep up its piety. — *Med.*
54.

1. Luke. XI. 3.

2. There are some who are timorous about Communion, because of their vain apprehension that they do not derive any fruit from it, imagining that it is an abuse of so august a mystery to partake of it so often without profit for the good of their souls. Do they count it as nothing that Communion keeps them from mortal sin? This alone is doubtless an inestimable advantage which should make them desire to *communicate every day*. — *Med.* 55.

3. How happy you should consider yourself to be in a state in which Communion being very frequent, you may always be one and form but one with Jesus Christ, possess His spirit and act only through Him. — *Med.* 54.

4. You should show your great love for Our Lord by being eager to receive Him as often as possible in the Holy Eucharist. — *Med.* 144.

5. You who have the happiness of being withdrawn from the world, should, in order to be worthy of your ministry, lead a life approaching that of the angels, and esteem yourself happy frequently to receive this Bread of angels which Jesus Christ presents to you, and with which He wishes to satiate you fully. — *Med.* 50.

6. The more virtue and perfection your state requires, the more also do you stand in need of strength and generosity to advance, and not to allow yourself to be cast down by the apprehension of the trials you may meet with.

Nourish yourself therefore with this divine Flesh in order to be fortified interiorly, and to overcome all the obstacles to your salvation. — *Med.* 49.

7. Do you strive to communicate frequently? You have the advantage of being able to do so in your Institute. Do you act conformably to the established customs in this respect? Do you receive Holy Communion with a tender affection? Look upon it as the greatest happiness you can enjoy in this world. — *Med.* 130.

8. Have you as great a desire to communicate as St. Martha had to receive Our Lord into her house? The respect that you should show Him when you receive Him consists in preparing your soul with much devotion, and in not suffering any imperfection in your heart. — *Med.* 147.

II. ADVANTAGES OF FREQUENT COMMUNION.

1. The effects of Holy Communion are so admirable and it does so much good to your soul, that this should particularly engage you to receive frequently. — *Med.* 54.

2. When we receive the Body of Our Lord, we have the advantage of participating in His life, of having within ourselves a pledge of eternal life, and of being moreover assured of living

eternally, if we preserve within ourselves the spirit of Jesus which He leaves to us. — *Med. 48.*

3. What a happiness to be able to communicate frequently in order to preserve grace, which would soon abandon you if you were to cease communicating! It is by receiving the Holy Eucharist that you will find relief in your pains, strength in your temptations in order that you may overcome them, and an easy means of making progress in virtue. Do not therefore neglect so holy a practice. — *Med. 54.*

4. Do your Communion result in making you more recollected, more humble, and more charitable towards your Brothers? Do you do more violence to yourself in order to correct yourself? Do you feel the revolt of your passions less frequently? Do you watch over yourself so as not to abandon yourself to them? You should try to have your Communion produce all these good effects in you. — *Med. 53.*

5. When we find ourselves in any special or extraordinary need or in any violent temptation, it is a great and powerful help in this need and to overcome the temptation by which we are so violently assailed, to address ourselves to Our Lord in the Sacrament of the altar, since He is a physician that cures all our diseases

and gives us all the graces we need. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

6. A soul that has eaten this Flesh of Our Lord and nourished itself with this Meat, no longer lives the natural life, no longer seeks to satisfy the senses, and no longer acts by its own spirit, but by the spirit of God, of whom it makes its nourishment. Are these the effects which are produced in you by your union with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist? — *Med. 49.*

7. If it be true, as is said, that it would require but one Communion well made to render us perfect, must it not be acknowledged that we are greatly to blame, since after so many Communions we are still so imperfect? — *Collection.*

III. A RELIGIOUS SHOULD NOT EASILY OMIT HOLY COMMUNION.

1. The Brothers shall have a very special love for Holy Communion; they shall not abstain therefrom on the ordinary days without necessity or the order of their Confessor. — *Rules, Chap. IV.*

2. The great advantages we derive from Communion are often the reason why the devil does his best to make some communicate only rarely, by the false pretexts he raises in their minds. — *Med. 55.*

3. If you wait to communicate until you are without defects, you will never do so during your whole lifetime. Not to fall into more considerable faults than you usually have to deplore must be looked upon as a fruit of Holy Communion, and this should induce you to continue in this holy practice. — *Med.* 55.

4. It is inconceivable that men who are born for heaven, and who, in Baptism, have promised to lead a holy life, should neglect the means which God gives them to sanctify themselves, and above all, the chief means. This is no other than the Communion of the Body of Jesus Christ, who uniting Himself to them, abundantly communicates to them the graces they need and which He has prepared for them. — *Med.* 50.

IV. — PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

1. As the Holy Eucharist is a sacrament of love, we must manifest a tender love for Our Lord when receiving Him ; therefore, devotion is one of the principal dispositions that we must bring to it. — *Med.* 55.

2. The fruit you derive from Holy Communion depends much on the dispositions with which you receive it. In what dispositions are you then, and with what purity of heart and intention do you approach Holy Communion ? — *Collection.*

3. Do you approach Holy Communion with the same dispositions that you would wish to have to enter heaven? Certainly we should not have less respect in receiving Jesus Christ than in being received by Him. — *Collection*.

4. Purify your heart in order to be prepared to receive Our Lord frequently and to profit by so great a favour. — *Med.* 147.

5. In order to receive the grace of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, which is to nourish our soul and to prevent us from falling into sin, it suffices to be exempt from mortal sin. If, however, we desire to profit by Communion as we should when we receive frequently, we should have confessed our venial sins, and have no affection for them, being resolved to correct ourselves of them, otherwise Communion will be of little use. Since we communicate in order to sanctify ourselves, we must, in order to produce this happy result, endeavour to be in such dispositions as to strengthen ourselves in grace, obtain new ones, and practise virtue with more facility. — *Med.* 53.

6. Is it because of a tender affection for Holy Communion that you receive? Do you look upon it as the greatest advantage and the greatest happiness you can enjoy in this world? — *Med.* 130.

7. The respect that you should show for Our Lord when you receive, consists in preparing your soul with much devotion, and not

suffering any imperfection in your heart. —
Med. 147.

V. ACT OF THANKSGIVING AFTER
 HOLY COMMUNION.

1. When you receive Our Lord, are you so united to Him that nothing may be able to separate you from Him, and after Communion, can you say with St. Paul: *Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?*¹ And can you then say with all the confidence of the Apostle, that *no creature shall be able to separate you from Our Lord?*² Act in such a manner that Holy Communion may produce in you so constant a union with Our Lord, that you may never be separated from Him. —
Med. 49.

2. It is well at Holy Communion and during thanksgiving to recall what we find most difficult in the service of God, and to say to ourselves: Behold! God gives Himself entirely to you; and will you not give yourself entirely to Him? And since this difficulty is the only obstacle, will you not overcome it through love for Him? Doubtless, you would not dare to

1. Rom. VIII. 35.

2. Rom. VIII. 39.

refuse. It is thus that we must urge and gently overcome ourselves. — *Collection.*

3. In order to see whether you profit by the visit and abode of Our Lord with you, examine whether you are more recollected and more pious than at other times. Do you watch over yourself especially on Communion days so as not to yield to your caprices and other irregular movements? If you wish to profit by the visit of Our Lord, you must leave Him absolute Master of your heart, and render yourself docile to everything He will require of you, often saying to Him with the prophet Samuel : *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth* ;¹ and with David : *I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me.*² — *Med.* 85.

4. You have the happiness of often having within you the body of Our Lord ; render Him, therefore, by your holy actions the respect you owe Him, and always live in a manner worthy of Him, so that He may be pleased to come to you and dwell with you. Show by your conduct that you consider yourself happy to possess Him, and, not being able always to have His sacred body in you, you do not on this account cease to have His spirit. — *Med.* 82.

5. Do you make it a point in each Communion to ask some special grace or virtue that you need ? See what you need most, and ask

1. I. Kings. III. 10.

2. Ps. LXXXIV. 9.

for it most earnestly, especially at the time of Holy Communion or immediately after receiving, when Our Lord is still sacramentally within you. For doubtless, since you then possess Him, He will, in His goodness, not refuse anything you ask of Him. — *Collection.*

6. Acknowledge your faults more particularly, above all the most considerable ; beg God's pardon and resolve to commit them no more. Renew your past resolutions on this point. This practice during the time of Communion and thanksgiving cannot be otherwise than very salutary. — *Collection.*

7. The love which Our Lord manifests in this august Sacrament well deserves that you should testify a reciprocal and most particular love which may inspire you with a most profound exterior and interior respect for this adorable mystery. — *Med. 47.*

8. Do we often reflect that Our Lord having given Himself entirely to us and for us, we should also give ourselves entirely to Him, do everything for Him, and not seek ourselves in anything ? — *Med. 88.*

9. Our whole study should be to detach ourselves from all things in order to attach ourselves to Him alone ; because there is nothing equal to Him, and He is the only master to whom we can safely give our heart. — *Med. 88.*

VI. WHY COMMUNION IS SOMETIMES BUT LITTLE PROFITABLE.

1. The reason why Communion does not always produce the fruit we should derive from it is because we communicate with considerable sins, though venial, without having previously confessed them. To communicate, for instance, after telling a lie, murmuring against our Superiors or our Brothers, scandalizing them, neglecting or being unwilling to perform a penance, deliberately allowing ourselves to indulge in some dangerous curiosity or like faults, is a mark that we have not much horror for sin, because we do not trouble ourselves much to purify our heart before Communion, and make little account of such sins which are not free from a certain gravity in a person who makes profession of tending to religious perfection.

Act therefore in such a way, in order to draw all possible fruit from your Communions, as to have your conscience altogether clean before approaching the Holy Table, without which you would testify little love for God, and little respect for Jesus Christ, whom you are about to receive. — *Med.* 53.

2. Our Lord does not wish that those who, by their state, should apply themselves to serve Him with fidelity, approach Him in prayer

or in Holy Communion, having the least coldness towards their Brothers. — *Med.* 58.

3. Act in such a manner as never to put any obstacle to Communion, so that it may thus produce all the fruit that God wishes you to derive from it. — *Med.* 58.

VII. ZEAL OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TO INSPIRE A TASTE FOR HOLY COMMUNION

St. John Baptist De La Salle zealously inculcated on those whom he found disposed, and especially his Brothers, the practice of frequent and fervent Communion. He urged the timid, encouraged the weak, and reproached the lukewarm with their tepidity which deprived them of their relish of the bread of life. If some of his disciples in consequence of slight imperfections, besought him to dispense them from it, he answered them: *Go my dear Brother, approach the Physician, and having made known your miseries, ask Him to cure you.* When another told him that he was not in the required state for Communion because he had not enough fervour, he replied: *Go to Communion in order to have some.*

The fear that he had that his disciples, through too great familiarity with Our Lord, might neglect to prepare themselves to receive Him, led him to exhort them frequently to redouble their faith and fervour when they multiplied their Communions. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVI.





XII

SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION

(JOY AND INTERIOR PEACE)

I. WHY DOES GOD GIVE SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION ?

1. The consolation which God sometimes gives in this life is but a refreshment He furnishes to holy souls, in the midst of their interior desolation, in order to help them to bear it with courage, and to increase their love, which is sometimes impaired through the weakness of nature. — *Med.* 18.

2. This sort of passing consolation should serve only to animate and strengthen us in the love of suffering, and in the esteem of interior and exterior pains from which one must not expect to be exempt in this life. — *Med.* 18.

3. The usual way of Almighty God, after temptations and interior trials suffered with patience, is to sustain with spiritual consolation the souls thus proved and purified. — *Med.* 18.

4. If you are entirely penetrated with the spirit of your state, God will grant you all sorts of consolation even in your most painful trials. — *Med.* 109.

5. You should esteem it a great reward and consolation that the children whom you are instructing conduct themselves properly, know their religion well and are pious. — *Med.* 207.

II. WE MUST NOT ATTACH OURSELVES TO CONSOLATION.

1. We must love the privation of sensible consolation in our spiritual exercises :

1. Because sensible consolation is given by God merely as an aid to our weakness ; He is at liberty to withdraw it at pleasure, and can assist us in other ways.

2. Because sensible consolation does not surely lead us to God ; faith alone does so without danger of deception.

3. Because, when we become attached to sensible consolation, it is our own satisfaction and not God that we seek. — *Collection.*

2. It is sometimes more advantageous to be deprived of sensible consolation than to be favoured with it, because the more we are disengaged from what pleases the senses, the more means we have of going purely to God, and

with entire detachment from creatures. Indeed, it is then that the spirit of God comes into the soul and fills it with His graces. — *Med. 35.*

III. THE JOY OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

1. The joy of the servants of God, according to the explanation of Our Lord, is solid, and not easily changed, because it is founded on what sustains the life of grace and the love of God in them; that is, on communion with God by means of prayer and the Sacraments, the consequence of which is that God, keeping up their joy, this joy is solidly founded, being established in Him. — *Med. 34.*

2. The joy of the servants of God being within themselves, nothing exterior can affect it injuriously, because nothing exterior can penetrate to the bottom of the heart, which has no communication with the exterior but inasmuch as it allows itself to be dominated by the senses. Now, as the joy of the just is caused by the love of God who is in the bottom of their hearts, and because this love has for its object an unchangeable and eternal good, it follows that they cannot be troubled in the possession of that delightful contentment, as long as charity unites their souls to God. — *Med. 34.*

3. Your joy is solid if you rejoice in the midst of suffering and pain ; but if you make it consist in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, how true it is then that it is only superficial, because it is of the same nature as its objects ; and this is no other than a very transitory and miserable pleasure. — *Med.* 34.

IV. ON INTERIOR PEACE AND THE MEANS OF PRESERVING IT.

1. One of the principal marks that a person leads an interior and spiritual life is when he has interior peace. — *Med.* 31.

2. As true interior peace proceeds from charity, nothing is more capable of destroying it than what wounds charity and causes the loss of the love of God. — *Med.* 31.

3. Never complain when you are in pain, either interior or exterior ; and rest assured that the more you suffer, the more means you will have of belonging to God. — *Med.* 35.

4. Rest your weakness on Our Lord and confide in His goodness, and He will not let you succumb under your miseries, unless your infidelities be the cause. Therefore be patient, wait, and consolation will come in due time. — *Letters.*

V. THE UNALTERABLE INTERIOR
PEACE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

St. John Baptist De La Salle knew so well how to govern sadness and other passions that naturally arise at the approach of affliction, that he never lost interior peace or union with God; the lively faith that he had that God is the dispenser of evils as well as of good, that He distributes them preferably to His elect, that His saints and friends have the largest share, all this, in his estimation, stripped afflictions of the natural horror they inspire, and rendered them agreeable.

Hence, that serenity of countenance, that tranquillity and evenness of soul, of which virtue itself produces such few examples. He was always found the same, and this made him so different from other men, and so like to God. He daily met with contradictions, rebuffs, outrages, injustice, calumny, fatigue, sickness and the miseries of life, without manifesting the slightest sign of ill humour, nor to those who tried his virtue the vain joy of having seen him complain, contradict or dispute. He did not know what it was to be spiteful, to show coldness, aversion or resentment; to be abrupt or to use smart repartee, much less threats or reproaches. He never took offence; hence, he did not find it difficult, I will not say to pardon or to be reconciled, but to lavish on those who offended him, new marks of his benevolence.

"He never complained of anything," said one of the Brothers who studied him best and imitated him most. "It could never be learned from his words, from the expression of his countenance or by any sign what he wanted or whether that which was given to him did not suit him. Always satisfied, when asked in sickness whether the manner in which he was cared

for was satisfactory, or if what was given him was good, he answered in a pleasant manner : *It is all right, it is very good, dear Brother*. Never was the slightest sign of impatience remarked in him. He was subject so tevere illness and sharp pains, but is was not known until he declared it with simplicity and candour to the doctor or the Brother infirmarian who asked him ". — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXV.





XIII

CONVERSION

I. ON CONVERSION AND THE MANNER OF BRINGING IT ABOUT.

1. The principal conversion is that of the heart; without it, that of the mind is altogether sterile. Hence if you strive to increase your faith, let it be to increase your piety. — *Med.* 175.

2. When your tendency towards God seems suspended, be prompt and docile to His voice; rise and walk as soon as He bids you; that is, resume the practice of the virtues that you may have found difficult; mortify your passions, and endeavour to overcome them. — *Med.* 71.

3. How often, perhaps, has not Our Lord called you? Have you not often said, like St. Augustine: *To-morrow, to-morrow, I shall be converted*? Do you not still repeat this every day? — *Med.* 167.

4 It is necessary that the change effected in us be interior, and that we be altogether trans-

formed by the light and plenitude of grace and by the possession of the spirit of God. If afterwards a change appears in our interior, it should be the result of the happiness that we feel in the depths of the soul on belonging entirely to God, because it will then be occupied only with Him and with what we shall do to please Him. — *Med.* 152.

5. It is only in retirement and prayer that a soul is enlightened by God and attains a true transfiguration, or rather a complete transformation of itself. — *Med.* 152.

6. Every one of us must expiate his past sins by penance in order to be in the way of salvation which he has lost, and to recover the facility of returning to God from whom he has separated himself. It is for this reason that God said by one of the prophets: *Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping, and in mourning.*¹ These are the surest means of returning to God when we have abandoned Him. Indeed it is penance which is the most conducive to obtain the purity of heart which David asked so earnestly of the Lord when he said: *Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*² The penitent king was well convinced that the stains of a sinful soul cannot be

1. Joel. II. 12.

2. Ps. L. 4.

washed away except by the tears that have their source in a contrite and humble heart.

Let us therefore often ask of God the grace to cleanse us so perfectly that there may remain no trace of our sins, and let us contribute thereto by the penance we shall do for them. — *Med. 4.*

7. In a word, *stripping ourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new,*¹ as St. Paul exhorts us. Pray to God according to the advice of the same Apostle, to renew in you the spirit of your state and profession. — *Med 92.*

II. THE INCOMPARABLE ZEAL OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

The holy priest possessed the rare and incomparable talent of winning souls to God; he had received a special grace to bring back into the way of salvation the souls that had strayed therefrom. Sinners found in him a father full of tenderness, a charitable physician, an enlightened guide, an advocate and zealous mediator with God, and a guardian angel. The sight of him brought them to his feet, his gracious manner charmed them, and they kept nothing secret from him who had won their hearts.

Being united to God by almost continual prayer, he drew therefrom the spirit that vivifies, the unction that touches, the virtue that acts and the grace that changes the most obdurate hearts; he also became in the hands of God an instrument of salvation that efficaciously brought about penance and conversion in the most hardened souls. — *Spirit and Virtues, Chap. XIII.*

1. Colos. III. 9-10.



XIV

CORRECTION

I. THE OBLIGATION OF TEACHERS TO CORRECT THEIR PUPILS.

1. One of the marks as well as one of the effects of zeal for good and for the salvation of souls is to reprimand and correct those entrusted to us when they commit any fault. — *Med.* 203.

2. Be careful not to suffer your pupils to commit considerable faults, without applying a prompt remedy. — *Med.* 203.

3. The means of saving the soul of a pupil from hell is to correct him prudently, which will make him change conduct; whereas, if abandoned to his will, he will run the risk of losing himself, and of being the desolation of his parents. The reason is this, that the faults he commits will become habits, of which he will later on have much trouble to correct himself. — *Med.* 203.

4. One of the principal motives that should

animate your zeal in reprimanding your pupils and correcting them of their faults is, that should you fail to do so, you would yourself be responsible for these faults before God, who would punish you for your looseness and negligence with regard to your pupils; because, being the substitutes of father and mother and their pastors, you are obliged to watch over them, *as being to render an account of their souls.*¹ — *Med.* 203.

II. THE PRACTICE OF CORRECTION.

1. The Brothers shall exercise all possible attention and vigilance over themselves so as to punish their pupils but rarely, being convinced as they should be, that this is one of the chief means of managing their school properly and of establishing very good order. — *Rules*, Chap. VIII.

2. When it is necessary for the Brothers to punish any of the pupils, they shall be extremely careful to do so with great moderation and self-possession, and with the conditions prescribed in the *Management of the Christian Schools*; therefore, they shall never undertake to punish in hastiness or when they feel excited. — *Rules*, Chap. VIII.

3. To be useful, correction should, on the

1. Heb. XIII. 17.

part of him who administers it, be : pure, charitable, just, suitable, moderate, peaceable and prudent ; and, on the part of him who receives it : voluntary, respectful and silent. — *Collection.*

4. It would be of little use to reprimand and correct, unless done properly. The first thing to which they who do so must pay attention, is not to undertake it except under the guidance of the spirit of God ; hence, before reprimanding or punishing, it is proper to recollect and give one's self up to the spirit of God, so as to administer the correction with as much discretion as possible, and in the manner best calculated to render it useful to him who is to receive it. — *Med.* 204.

5. Your pupils being Christians, it is not only necessary to place yourself in the necessary dispositions to administer the reprimand or correction in such a way as may be pleasing to God, but also, that they may receive it as a remedy for their fault and a means of becoming better ; for, this is the effect which, the Holy Ghost tells us, correction should produce in children. After examining before God what correction the fault deserves, it is also necessary to assure yourself that the culprit is prepared to receive it with submission, or to endeavour to dispose him for it. — *Med.* 204.

6. Use moderation when those whom you have to instruct, fall into any fault and you are obliged to correct them for it. Should

you be excited or troubled, be very careful not to administer any reprimand under such circumstances, because then the correction would be hurtful to the pupils as well as to yourself personally. — *Med.* 204.

III. THE ADMIRABLE WISDOM OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE IN HIS CORRECTIONS.

In his corrections, he did not make use of harsh expressions : and when the obduracy of a subject obliged him to use vigorous language, he seasoned it with such kindness that his reprimand savoured more of the goodness than of the severity of the superior : in a word, being polite, affable, complaisant and gracious, if there was any severity or rigour, it was only for himself. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXV.





XV

THE CROSS

I. ESTEEM AND LOVE OF THE CROSS.

1. Convince yourself that you will not become a true disciple of Jesus Christ until you love Him and are prepared to suffer everything for His love. — *Med.* 102.

2. If you wish to be honoured with God's graces, especially those which He grants only to His chosen ones, be happy when He afflicts and proves you, for, as the Apostle says : *He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*¹ — *Med.* 177.

3. Try to understand that what testifies most love for God is willingly to suffer something to please Him and in conformity with Our Lord crucified; it is also this which is most capable of obtaining many graces from God. — *Med.* 130.

4. Do you honour the cross when you have the advantage of bearing one? Do you thank God for the honour He confers on you? Do

1. Heb. XII. 6.

you protest on such occasions that you glory only in the cross of Jesus Christ? Is not the cross more a torture to you than an honour, because you look on it only as a thing which torments and crucifies you, instead of receiving it with affection and respect, as a gift of God and an honour He confers on you? And yet, it is thus you should embrace the cross, if you wish to suffer as a Christian. — *Med.* 121.

5. It is not proper that the honour we pay to the cross of Jesus Christ should be limited to paying it respect and adoration; we must also love it with all the affection of our heart, and desire to die attached to it, as Jesus, our divine Master desired. — *Med.* 165.

6. When you meet with any affliction, unite yourself then to Jesus suffering, as being one of His members, and love His cross; this union and love will alleviate your pain and make it much more endurable. — *Med.* 165.

7. All the exterior and interior honour that we might render to the cross of Our Lord would be of little use, if we were not to honour it in another manner, that is, by bearing constantly, as good and faithful servants, the cross which the same Jesus, our Master, may wish to impose on us. — *Med.* 165.

8. Is it the cross of Jesus Christ you are carrying? How do you recognize it? Do the pains you meet with make you practise many virtues? Be careful: if they discourage

you and make you murmur, they are crosses of thieves. — *Med.* 121.

9. Take the true road to heaven which is that of suffering ; it is the narrow gate ; make every effort to pass through it ; Our Lord will not fail to give you a helping hand to enter. — *Med.* 73.

II. THE LOVE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR THE CROSS.

He was never seen to be more content, more pleasant and tranquil than in the face of tribulations ; and if they were of such a nature that he could not make them the object of his joy, he then made them the object of his submission and resignation to the will of God, and of perfect and loving abandonment to the orders of His Providence. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXV. 2.

Where St. John Baptist De La Salle suffered most was where his Institute flourished most ; where he was repelled most, his children were best received ; where he sowed carrying the cross and torn with thorns, there the Brothers gathered the most abundant harvest. — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. III, Chap. V.





XVI

DETACHMENT

I. NECESSITY OF DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES.

1. Detachment from riches and the conveniences of life is one of the first dispositions we should have to belong entirely to God and to labour for the salvation of souls. — *Med.* 187.

2. You who have retired from the world, should be entirely disengaged from human inclinations which only drag one down to earth; you should think only of heaven, to which you should keep your mind and heart raised, because you are made only for heaven, should labour only for heaven, and will find perfect rest only in heaven. — *Med.* 40.

3. When we leave the world, when in leaving it we renounce the pleasures of the senses, it sometimes happens that we make this renunciation only through taste, through sensible attraction to God and the things of God which give us satisfaction above that of the senses. Thus it is a greater pleasure which causes us to deprive ourselves willingly of another which is less, and this is

a sign that we are not yet entirely detached.

Fervently ask of God this perfect detachment, so that you may be attached to Him alone, in whom consists all the happiness of this life and the next. — *Med.* 35.

4. Attach yourself only to Our Lord and to His doctrine and holy maxims, since He has done you the honour of choosing you preferably to a great number of others to announce Him to children, who are His dearly beloved ones. — *Med.* 167.

5. You have to suffer a continual martyrdom, which is not less painful to the mind than that of St. Bartholomew was to the body. You should, so to speak, strip off your own skin, by stripping yourself of what St. Paul calls the *old man*,¹ to put on the spirit of Jesus Christ which is, according to the same Apostle, *putting on the new*² man. Let this therefore be your aim during your whole life, so that you may become true disciples of Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 159.

II. THE FRUITS OF DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES.

1. The more you are detached from creatures, the more you will possess God and His love. Why not say with St. Augustine before

1. Colos. III. 9.

2. Colos. III. 10.

his conversion : “ It is only trifles that hold me back and prevent me from belonging entirely to God.” — *Med.* 173.

2. You must detach yourself from all things created, and love only God, for, whoever is attached to the world and its goods cannot receive the Spirit of God, who communicates Himself only to those whom He finds void of what is not God. This is why Our Lord says that the world cannot receive the divine Spirit, because it loves only the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life. Detach yourself therefore from all things, and attach yourself to God alone, if you wish to be prepared to receive the Spirit of God. — *Med.* 42.

3. If you wish to render yourself worthy of being employed in saving souls, be detached from everything, and the grace of God will be poured out on you in abundance both for yourself and for others. Say, as is written in Genesis : *Give me the persons, and the rest take to thyself,*¹ for, with the exception of the love of God and the salvation of souls, all the rest should be indifferent to you. — *Med.* 187.

4. It can hardly be believed how much good a person who is detached from everything, can do in the Church. The reason is, because this detachment implies the most

1. Gen. XIV. 21.

lively faith, and most particularly in the divine Providence to which we abandon ourselves, as a mariner putting out to sea without sails or oars. Ask of God the disinterestedness so necessary in your profession, and on your part, dispose yourself properly to obtain so precious a gift. — *Med.* 134.

5. Shall we always resist the light of grace which urges us to leave everything for God? And yet, it is only in Him that we shall find true happiness, even in this world. — *Med.* 169.

III. THE PRACTICE OF DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES.

1. Our only care should be to detach ourselves from everything in order to attach ourselves to God alone; because there is nothing equal to Him, and because He is the only Master to whom we can safely give our heart. — *Med.* 88.

2. Learn to live in detachment from all things. — *Med.* 173.

3. You have exteriorly renounced the world and all that men there seek to satisfy themselves: be careful that this renunciation be interior and procure for you an entire detachment from all things. — *Med.* 137.

4. We made profession of renouncing all things when we left the world; but did we do

it for good? Are we no longer attached to anything? We shall know whether it is thus, if we are pleased to be poor, and if we do not wish for conveniences nor to possess anything. — *Med.* 97.

5. You who have left the world, have you so renounced it that you no longer think of it? Are you entirely disgusted with what constitutes the pleasure of those who live in the world, and are you no longer attached to anything? — *Med.* 144.

6. Do you belong to Jesus Christ in such a manner that you no longer think of yourself? Be concerned only with nourishing your soul with the maxims of the Holy Gospel, endeavouring to practise them with as much affection for what concerns your spiritual advancement as indifference for the wants of the body. — *Med.* 59.

7. Let us often reflect that Jesus, having given Himself entirely to us and for us, we should also give ourselves entirely to Him, do everything for Him, and not seek ourselves in anything. Our sole care should be to detach ourselves from all things, in order to attach ourselves to Him alone; because there is nothing equal to Him, and because He is the only Master to whom we can safely give our heart. — *Med.* 88.

8. We should use our senses only because we believe such to be the will of God. If, for

example, we thought it were not the will of God that we should look at an object, we would refrain from looking at it. For this reason, we should not desire to see objects except through necessity, and never for the mere pleasure they might give; because God has given us our senses to be used only when necessary and not to take pleasure in their use. — *Collection*.

9. Are you not attached to anything, and can you say that there is not anything from which you cannot separate yourself without pain? Do you not esteem one creature more than another? When anything is taken from you which is fine in appearance and something inferior is given you instead, are you satisfied? It is by such practices that it may be seen whether you are attached to anything, and whether you despise all creatures. — *Med.* 125.

10. How happy you would be if you were no longer attached to any creature! And yet, you cannot be worthy of your holy ministry but inasmuch as you are in this disposition, because it is the first thing that God requires from those who wish to be His disciples. Nothing contributes so much to detachment from creatures as solitude, because, as we can there seek only God, we think first of banishing from the heart all that is created, in order to be filled entirely with the Sovereign Good. — *Med.* 180.

IV. THE ADMIRABLE DETACHMENT
OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

The counsel of Our Lord that says in a formal manner : *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor ; come, follow me,* ¹ was the first and strongest motive which led him to resign his canonicate and divest himself of his patrimony. He desired to be perfect, and his desire made it a precept for him to become poor.

The detachment of St. John Baptist De La Salle from all earthly things was equal to his abandonment to Providence. After divesting himself of his goods, his heart was never attached to anything ; and it seems as if the extinction of all cupidity in him was the effect and reward of this generous renouncement. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. VI.

1. Matt. XIX. 21.





XVII

G O D

I. THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

1. Do you esteem only God? Are you often filled with admiration at His infinite greatness, and then, penetrated with profound respect at the contemplation of His sublime perfections, do you exclaim that their excellence being beyond the comprehension of man, cannot be adored or praised as much as they deserve? Do you represent to yourself in a lively manner that God is everywhere? — *Med.* 90.

2. God alone is amiable, because He is the only being that is essentially good in Himself. God is infinitely good and the inexhaustible source of all created good. — *Med.* 70.

3. God loved us so much as to give us His only Son. — *Med.* 51.

II. THE CONDUCT OF GOD TOWARDS HIS SERVANTS.

1. God governs all things with wisdom. — *Med.* 163.

2. It is the ordinary way of God to thwart

the designs of men, and arrange that the contrary happen to what they propose, in order that they may learn to trust in Him, to abandon themselves entirely to His Providence, and not to undertake anything of themselves, because they should not wish for anything but what He wills. — *Med.* 23.

3. The more we ask from God, the more He gives, because He takes delight in giving. He wishes to give you more than you wish to ask for ; He has more compassion for your miseries than you have desire to be freed from them. — *Med.* 38.

4. If you do not wish to suffer anything from your Brothers, God will not suffer anything from you, but punish you terribly for your offences against Him. If, on the contrary, you suffer everything from your Brothers, God will pardon you all your offences against Him. — *Med.* 74.

5. Admire how God, in His goodness, provides for the wants of all His creatures, and what admirable means He takes to procure for man the knowledge of the truly good, that is, what regards the salvation of his soul. — *Med.* 197.

6. God is so good, that He will not leave unrewarded the good done for Him ; and especially, the service rendered Him by labouring for the salvation of souls. — *Med.* 207.

7. God generally exalts those who humble themselves. — *Med* 113.

8. God usually fills those with consolation who love the holy exercise of mental prayer. — *Med.* 129.

9. God protects those who take up His cause. — *Med.* 136.

10. God grants everything to those who pray. He grants nothing to the proud, but He refuses nothing to the humble. — *Med.* 38.

11. God takes pleasure in hearing the meek and humble of heart. — *Med.* 103.

12. The more you abandon yourself to God with regard to temporal things, the more will He provide them for you. If, on the contrary, you wish to provide for them yourself, Providence will leave the care of them to you, and it may often happen that even necessary things will fail you, God wishing thus to punish you for your little faith and for your distrust. — *Med.* 67.

III. THE SERVICE OF GOD.

1. You are destined by Almighty God only to apply yourself to what regards His service and the care of souls. — *Med.* 2.

2. Be careful to do everything that God requires of you, considering that it is by His will that you should be guided in all things.

You should on all occasions show that you depend on God, and that at the first sign, you will be glad to go where He calls you. — *Med.* 6.

3. It is necessary for you to fight valiantly under the standard of God, and to use the arms He places in your hands. — *Med.* 22.

4. It is through an effect of blindness of the understanding and hardness of heart caused by sin, that men, enlightened only on the things of this world, have no light, no conception of what regards God and His service. — *Med.* 32.

5. Jesus Christ, in entering a soul, raises it in such a way above all human sentiments by the faith that animates it, that it no longer sees anything but by His divine light; and whatever may happen to it, nothing will make it waver or abandon the service of God, nor even diminish the ardour of its love for Him, the darkness which previously obscured the understanding being changed into an admirable light, so that it no longer sees anything except with the eyes of faith. — *Med.* 32.

6. You who have given yourself to God, and who consequently should consecrate to Him all the time of your life, should also do everything through the spirit of religion, and not be satisfied with merely discharging the duties of your state exteriorly; because, though men are satisfied with what is apparent in actions, God, who

sounds the heart, will take no account of what is merely exterior. — *Med.* 58.

7. Jesus Christ will provide for everything necessary, if you think only of sanctifying yourself, and acquitting yourself well of the duties of your state. You, who in your state are doing the work of God, rest assured that He will take care of you, provided you serve Him with fidelity, and omit nothing that He requires of you. — *Med.* 59.

8. Oh, how happy it is to serve God! He knows well how to reward abundantly and raise to great glory those who serve Him. Grant, O my sovereign Creator, that with Thy holy grace, I may apply myself with all my strength to serve Thee, in order to procure Thy glory as I have promised. Be pleased to give me Thy holy blessing for so glorious and important an undertaking. — *Med.* 103.

IV. CONFORMITY WITH THE WILL OF GOD.

1. Our Lord tells us in the Gospel that He came into this world not to do His own will, but solely the will of God His Father. It is thus that we should act when there is question of undertaking anything or desisting from anything. — *Med.* 6.

2. God has called you into retirement and into a holy place, that is, into His own house,

where He has assembled those whom He has chosen for Himself; if you go out from it, it should be only because God wishes and commands it. — *Med.* 6.

3. The simplicity with which we obey, produces in us this effect, that the mind, considering only the will of God, disregards all human views and reasons. — *Med.* 9.

4. What is commanded and what you do in obeying is the will of God, who knows what you can do, and who cannot command what is above your strength. — *Med.* 10.

5. Not to be willing to obey except in things for which we have an inclination, is to wish to do our own will and not that of God. We should be convinced that it is the will of God that we do in obeying. — *Med.* 10.

6. We should consider ourselves happy to be in a state which binds us to obey. But, if we wish it to be thus, it is necessary to practise obedience with all possible perfection; now, God grants this grace only to those who have divested themselves of their own will, and who look upon His as the rule and principle of their whole conduct. — *Med.* 12.

7. What is most sacred in religion is the performance of the will of God. — *Med.* 15.

8. In order that Jesus may reign in your soul, you must, when performing your actions, have in view solely the performance of His holy

will, which should direct them all, so that there may be nothing human about them. As the principal object of Our Lord in coming into this world was the accomplishment of the will of His Father, He also wishes that you who are His members and vassals, and who, as such, should be united to Him, should have this end in view in all your actions. — *Med.* 22.

9. Do you endeavour, in imitation of your divine Master, to will but that which God wills, when He wills, and as He wills? — *Med.* 24.

10. In order to receive the Holy Ghost, we must endeavour to do the will of God in all things. As the Holy Ghost cannot be pleased except with those who endeavour always to do what God requires of them, and act in conformity with His holy law in all things, we must not expect to receive Him, if we do not try to accomplish the will of God in all things. Do therefore exactly what you know to be the will of God. — *Med.* 42.

11. In order to know the will of God, do you, first of all, have recourse to prayer? And in doubt, do you decide only on what is most calculated to mortify you and make you die to yourself? These are two sure means of knowing and doing the will of God. — *Med.* 128.

12. It should be only in obedience to the will of God, and through submission to your superior, that you labour for the salvation of souls.

This will be the means of sanctifying yourself in this employment and bringing about the sanctification of others. — *Med.* 135.

13. God sends us His inspirations only that we may conform our conduct thereto. Let us be prompt to put them in practice, with the view of perfectly accomplishing the will of God. — *Med.* 141.

V. GRATITUDE TOWARDS GOD.

1. We must render ourselves agreeable in the sight of God by continual acts of thanksgiving, as well as by frequent acts of love and praise. — *Med.* 83.

2. Thank God for the favour He has done you by withdrawing you from the world and calling you to the holy employment of teaching children and making them pious. — *Med.* 99.

3. Thank God for the grace He has granted you of being despised and loaded with opprobrium and calumny ; never manifest any esteem for what you do, because it is God who, through His goodness and grace, is the author of all that is good in you. — *Med.* 63.

4. Our Lord accepted suffering and death for our sins and the sins of all mankind. Thank Him for so great a favour, and render yourself worthy to receive the fruits thereof

by participating in His sufferings yourself. — *Med.* 25.

5. Render to Our Lord your humble acts of thanksgiving for His goodness in giving Himself to you in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and for being always prepared to favour you with a profusion of graces. — *Med.* 47.

6. If we have graces in abundance to save ourselves and become perfect saints, we are indebted therefore to Our Lord, who became man for us. Let us show Him marks of gratitude above all, by the holy use of the graces which are the fruit of His Incarnation. — *Med.* 112.

7. You have the happiness of labouring for the instruction of the poor, and to have an employment which is esteemed and honoured only by those who are animated with a Christian spirit. Appreciate this favour, and thank God for having called you to a state, which, though so sanctifying and conducive to the sanctification of others, nevertheless has nothing about it that is brilliant before men, and is frequently even an occasion of humiliation for those who exercise it. — *Med.* 113.

8. How happy we are when we are removed from the occasion of offending God! This advantage we enjoy in religion. We should frequently and even daily thank God for this grace, because it is one of the principal means of saving ourselves. — *Med.* 126.

9. To whom should we attach ourselves, if not to Him from whom we have received everything, who alone is our Lord and Father, and who has made us only for Himself? It is this consideration and the gratitude we owe Him for all His favours which must often have taken up our thoughts and prompted our hearts to give ourselves entirely to God. — *Med.* 90.





XVIII

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

I. — THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION.

1. God has given you superiors whose duty it is to hold His place in your regard, to guide you in the way to heaven by their words and acts, as He does interiorly by the action of His grace on you. — *Med.* 91.

2. Never depend on your own light, nor even on that which seems to you to be from God; expose things to those who conduct you, and submit to their light and guidance. — *Med.* 99.

3. As we should be convinced that a superior is the minister of Jesus Christ, and that God is in him and speaks to us through him, we should receive his words as the words of God Himself. — *Med.* 21.

4. It sometimes happens that you believe you are doing well, and yet it may not be so, either for yourselves or for others, because in what you undertake, you have no other guide than your own mind. When we conduct ourselves thus, we really labour like St. Peter, who could not catch any fish in the darkness

of the night, because our mind often serves only to lead us astray, the light in it being most frequently but darkness. Be careful therefore to follow a sure guide, if you do not wish to go astray and render your labour useless. — *Med.* 57.

II. THE BLIND SUBMISSION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TO HIS DIRECTORS.

His obedience to his directors was admirable. He consulted them in everything, and he was faithful to follow their advice. Trained to this holy practice at St. Sulpice, he kept it up during the rest of his life, and he may be held up as a model on this point. He acted with the simplicity, candour and docility of a child towards him to whom he had confided the direction of his conscience. He gave him such control over his person, that he became the slave of his every will. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXIII, 5.





XIX

THE GIFT OF ONE'S SELF

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF THE GIFT OF ONE'S SELF TO GOD.

1. Oh, how advantageous to give one's self to God! Even in this life, He rewards His servants; He gives the soul that consecrates itself to Him the most pure and sweet consolations, and He causes those to be honoured by men who delight in humiliations. The more you give to God, the more good will He do you; the more despised you will be before men, the greater will you be in the sight of God. — *Méd.* 104.

2. In withdrawing from the world, you consecrated yourself to God, to live in this community with an entire disengagement from everything in the world capable of satisfying the senses. You should consider that day as the beginning of your happiness on earth, to be one day consummated in heaven. It is not for a time only that you should have given yourself to God, but forever. As you have

consecrated your soul to Him and your soul will live forever, your devotedness to His glory must be endless; if you have begun it in this world, it is in a way but an apprenticeship of what you are to do eternally in heaven. — *Med.* 191.

3. You who have left the world to follow Jesus Christ into retirement, let it be your whole endeavour to give yourself entirely to Him. — *Med.* 59.

4. Oh! how many persons consecrated to God, who have not given themselves entirely to Him, and who live in indolence and negligence! Say at least with David : *Now have I begun : this is the change of the right hand of the most High.*¹ — *Med.* 123.

5. God being infinitely above all things created, our life, such as it is or may be, deserves no consideration from us, if compared with Him who is its author. Should you not then offer it to God, and make Him a sacrifice of it in order to preserve His love or increase it in yourself? — *Med.* 70.

6. You should not be satisfied with having offered yourself once to Our Lord; you should renew this offering daily, and consecrate to Him all your actions by doing them only for Him. — *Med.* 104.

II. THE GIFT OF HIMSELF THAT ST. JOHN BAPTIST
DE LA SALLE MADE TO GOD.

By uniting himself to the Brothers and giving himself to them as a model of a poor, abject, despised, mortified and austere life, he thought only of founding his Institute on abandonment to Providence; and in order to teach them to trust in Providence, he entered upon the renouncement which Our Lord requires of those who wish to be perfect. He carried out to the letter the counsel of selling his goods and giving them to the poor, and reserving for himself only the cross as a heritage. In determining to live in community, he condemned himself to a true martyrdom. Until his death, his zeal was invincible; finally, he gained the victory over all the efforts of hell, by his perseverance in suffering everything and making himself a victim. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XV.





XX

MEEKNESS

I. THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF MEEKNESS.

1. It is a great advantage to understand and practise well the lesson of Our Lord : *Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart.*¹ But this is not the only advantage derived from meekness ; the principal fruit is that by means of it we easily acquire the most sublime virtues ; and in fact, it is by it that the passions are controlled and fraternal union preserved. Never therefore speak to your Brothers but with meekness, and keep silent when you fear it may be otherwise. — *Med.* 65.

2. To be considerate is one of the best means of gaining and touching the hearts of those who have fallen into any fault, and to dispose them, by expiation, to correct themselves. — *Med.* 204.

3. Do you, by your meekness and discretion, induce those who are confided to you to abandon vice and libertinism, and to give themselves

1. Matt. XI. 29.

to piety? These two means, joined to prayer, are often more efficacious with souls than any other that can be imagined. — *Med.* 114.

4. The more tenderness you show for the members of Jesus Christ and of the Church who are confided to you, the more admirable effects of grace will God produce in them. — *Med.* 134.

5. Our Lord, in His sermon on the mount, said to His Apostles : *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land,*¹ that is, the whole world, because they possess the whole world who possess the hearts of all men. In this they easily succeed who are meek and considerate. They insinuate themselves in such a manner into the hearts of those with whom they converse and with whom they have relations, that they insensibly win them and obtain all they wish from them. It is thus that hearts are won, and that we make them do what we wish ; it is thus that those who are born with this happy disposition, or who have acquired it with the help of grace, render themselves as it were masters of others, and lead them to duty as they wish. — *Med.* 65.

6. Are you animated with sentiments of charity and tenderness for the poor children whom you have to bring up, and do you profit by their affection for you to lead them to God? If you have the firmness of a father towards

them to withdraw them from disorder or prevent them from falling into it, you should also have for them the tenderness of a mother to attach them to your lessons, and do them all the good that depends on you. — *Med.* 101.

II. THE ADMIRABLE MEEKNESS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

It might be said of this holy priest who was so mortified, so humble and so interior that, like Moses, he was the meekest of men. His sweet and tender charity won him all hearts. Firmness joined to meekness, and purity joined to tenderness, were the special characteristics of his charity towards his neighbour.

The meekness of Our Lord on which the holy priest modelled his own was rooted in the depths of his soul; hence there was never one more upright of heart nor more sincere in what he said.

The holy man, enriched with the goods furnished by this world and which the Gospel promises to the meek of heart, exercised all his zeal to make his disciples take up this admirable virtue. He carefully recommended them when speaking to anyone, especially their brothers, to do so with great kindness, and to banish from their conversation every sharp or hasty word. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXV.



XXI

EDIFICATION

I. THE NECESSITY AND EFFICACY OF GOOD EXAMPLE.

1. It is especially in religious communities that good example shines forth most and has the greatest force and the most happy results.

And in fact, all who live in community, animate one another reciprocally to practise what is most perfect in the maxims of the Gospel; what one does, the other would be ashamed not to do; for according to a maxim of philosophers, the love and practice of what is good is easily communicated by example to those who have a little good will to execute it.

Let everyone therefore be encouraged to do well by the example of his most fervent Brothers, and who most have the spirit of the Institute. — *Med.* 180.

2. Often reflect that you should be a model of innocence and fervour with regard to your Brothers; that is, that you should observe your Rules with exactitude, and not only use the means that God has given you to save your soul, but also to edify your Brothers. — *Med.* 69.

3. Your profession obliges you to a certain extent to be in the world every day, where even your smallest actions are observed. This should engage you to be a model of every virtue in the eyes of seculars with whom you have to live. It is especially by your gravity and modesty that you should try to edify them, because, if they remark in you the slightest trait of frivolity or dissipation, they will be easily scandalized, whereas, if you appear among them with a recollected exterior, they will have much veneration for you. — *Med.* 69.

4. If exteriorly your behaviour is simple and grave, the world will soon be convinced that your interior is well regulated, and that there is reason to believe that you are fit to convey to your disciples the spirit of Christianity. See of what importance it is for you and for the honour of your employment to have a modest and becoming exterior when you appear before men of the world, if you wish to edify them. — *Med.* 69.

5. There is no one to whom you cannot and should not endeavour to be useful by the example of your virtues; it is thus you are obliged to preach to the whole world, and it is the chief apostolic function you should perform. — *Med.* 128.

6. Labouring for the salvation of others, you should begin by giving them good example in order to win them over to God. — *Med.* 92.

7. Act in such a manner that your whole exterior, as well as all your words and actions may breathe virtue. It is only for this end that God wishes you abroad to exercise your employment ; prepare yourself therefore in your retreat, to correspond with His intentions. — *Med.* 98.

8. Everything in you, both exterior and interior, should manifest the holiness to which your profession obliges you. Your exterior should be holy, because it should be edifying ; you should be so recollected, so modest and so reserved, that it may really appear that God is in you, and that you have only Him in view in your conduct. Your actions should be holy, being performed through a motive that should be holy, with attention to God and according to the rules that are laid down for you, and which are the proper means of sanctifying yourself. These are the fruits which you should bear in the state in which God has placed you. — *Med.* 60.

9. You cannot better instruct your pupils than by edifying them. — *Med.* 155.

10. Oh ! what force and efficacy example has to convert souls and make them advance in perfection !

11. Since you are called in your state to procure the sanctification of your pupils, you should be holy with a sanctity that is not ordinary ; because, it is you who are to communicate sanctity to them as much by your

good example as by the words of salvation that you should daily announce to them. — *Med.* 39.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF THE SUPERIOR OF THE SEMINARY OF SAINT-NICOLAS-DU-CHARDONNET ON THE EDIFICATION GIVEN BY ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

“ We had the happiness of being edified by this holy priest during nearly six months that he did us the honour of being with us, and I believe that God sent him to preach to our young men by his example, and to draw us out of our relaxation. His life here was most humble and mortified: he slept little and prayed much. Our *excitateur* told me several times that he always found him up when he went to awake him and that even during the cold winter, during which he did not go to warm himself except when I forced him to do so, which happened rarely, my hour for rising not being the same as his. He made meditation regularly at least three hours a day; he was more regular than the least of all the seminarists, obeying with edifying promptitude the first sound of the bell which called to exercises. ” — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. II, Chap. XVII.



XXII

THE CHURCH

I. SUBMISSION TO THE CHURCH.

1. It is not allowable to doubt what the Church teaches; we must submit our mind to all her decisions in matters of faith and religion, with as much simplicity as we submit to the Gospel. — *The Duties of a Christian.*

2. The Pope being the Vicar of Jesus Christ and the successor of St. Peter, has authority which extends to the whole Church. All the faithful, who are her members, must look upon him as their Father, and his voice as the word which God uses to make His orders known to them. It is he who has the universal power that Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter of binding and loosing; it is to him, in the person of this holy Apostle, that He committed the care of feeding His flock. Your duty being to care for and defend a portion of this same flock, you should honour our Holy Father the Pope as the Supreme and universal Pastor and High-Priest of the Church; you should also have so much respect for his words, that

it should suffice for anything to come from him to give it conscientious attention.

Is it thus you have acted until now? Adore the authority of God in the Sovereign Shepherd of souls, and look upon him always as the infallible Doctor of the Church. — *Med.* 106.

3. The Bishops, being established by God to be the defenders of the Church, are also, as St. Paul says : *The ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.*¹ You must therefore honour them, respect their words, and be submissive to them in everything relative to the care of the souls confided to you. As they are established by God to watch over the doctrine and morals of those who labour under their authority, and as they are entrusted with the entire spiritual guidance of their dioceses, it is necessary that all who are there employed in saving souls should do it only with dependence on them ; it is thus that they will draw down the blessing of God on themselves and their labours.

Acknowledge that it is God who established this subordination, and submit very perfectly thereto. — *Med.* 106.

4. The Church, having established a special feast to recall the pontificate of the Prince of the Apostles at Antioch and to honour its memory, furnishes us with the occasion of

paying special attention to the submission we owe to her as well as to the august pontiff who is her head.

The Church is our Mother ; we should therefore be intimately united with her and show her such dependence in everything that relates to religion, as to listen to and receive all her decisions as oracles pronounced by Jesus Christ Himself.

It is for her to make the truth known to us ; and we must receive it from her mouth without any doubt or examination. All we have to say to what she proposes to our belief is : “ I believe without hesitation.” We must receive her teaching with the most entire docility ; because it is Jesus Christ Himself who has conferred on her His power and authority over us and who tells us : *If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.*¹ This made St. Augustine say that he would not believe the Gospel if he were not bound to do so by the authority of the Church. — *Med.* 106.

5. Let us leave to the learned their learned controversies ; let us leave to them the refutation of heresies and the confounding of heretics ; as to ourselves, let us speak only of the common doctrine of Jesus Christ, and adopt the practice of following in all things what the Church teaches the faithful in her approved

1. Matt. XVIII. 17.

catechisms ; that is, the catechisms gotten up or adopted by the Bishops, united to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and let us never take the liberty of dogmatizing on the difficulties of religion. — *Med.* 5.

II. LOVE AND DEVOTEDNESS TO THE CHURCH.

1. You must make the Church see your love for her by the proofs of zeal that you will give. It is for the Church, as being the body of Jesus Christ, that you labour, since she has made you ministers with regard to your disciples in charging you with dispensing the word of God to them. And as the Church is very zealous for the sanctification of her children, it is your duty to share in this zeal, in order to be able to say to God with King David : *The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.*¹ This house is no other than the Church, since it is the faithful who are the edifice : *Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.*²

2. Act in such a way by your zeal, as to give sensible proofs that you love those confided to you as Jesus Christ loved His Church. Make them truly enter this edifice and figure there

1. Ps. LXVIII. 10.

2. Ephes. II. 20.

with dignity, according to the desire of Our Lord : *Who delivered himself up for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle.*¹ — *Med.* 201.

3. You will procure the welfare of the Church by making your pupils true Christians, and by making them docile to the truths of faith and the maxims of the Holy Gospel. — *Med.* 160.

III. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE SENDS TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES TO ROME.

In the year 1700, St. John Baptist executed a project with which God had long inspired him. It was to send two of his disciples to Rome to establish themselves there. The motives were : 1. To plant the tree of the Society and make it take root in the centre of unity, in the shadow, and under the eyes and auspices of the Holy See ; 2. To found it on a solid rock against which the gates of hell might not prevail, and to attach it to that Church which can neither perish nor fail ; 3. To prepare for himself a way to go and prostrate himself at the feet of the Vicar of Jesus Christ to ask the approbation of his Rules and Constitutions, and the grace for his Brothers to make the three solemn vows of religion ; 4. To obtain the Apostolic blessing on his Institute, authorize it with the protection of the head of the Church, and receive its mission to teach the Christian doctrine under the good pleasure and consent of the bishops. Finally, the pious Founder wished to send into the principal city, the source of Catholic communion, some of his disciples, to be the guarantees of his faith, of his inviolable union with the Holy See and of his submission to its decisions, at a time when so many people in France seemed not to make any account of them.

1. Ephes. V. 25, 27.

These are the sentiments with which he always inspired his disciples, in which he carefully educated them, and which he explained to them as early as 1694, when they made the vow of perpetual obedience. From that time, he laid it down, that it was necessary to take measures for obtaining the approbation of the Holy See. This he points out in the first article of his testament. — Blain, Bk. II, Chap. XVII.

I recommend in the first place my soul to God, and then all the Brothers of the Society of the Christian Schools, to whom He has united me, and I recommend them above all things, to be always entirely submissive to the Church and especially in these sad times : and, in order to give evidence of this submission, never to be at variance in anything with our Holy Father the Pope and the Church of Rome, always bearing in mind that I sent two Brothers to Rome in order to ask of God the grace that their Society may always be entirely submissive to the Holy See. — *Testament of St. John Baptist De La Salle.*





XXIII

CHURCHES

I. THE RESPECT DUE TO CHURCHES.

1. It is in churches that God wishes us to perform the most holy actions, and in which we render Him the most august duties of religion. For this reason, He commands us to keep ourselves there in the most profound respect, and He threatens to destroy those who profane them by their irreverence. — *Med.* 188.

2. It is God Himself who has chosen the churches to be there honoured with a special worship; it is there that He is prepared to bestow His graces most abundantly on those who ask for them with sincere devotion. If, in the Old Law, the tabernacle could not be entered but with fear and trembling, and yet it contained only the tables of the law, with what reverence and humility should we not conduct ourselves where God is seated on a throne of love in order to grant us pardon, and where He is continually adored by an infinity of angels, who hold it as the highest honour to be in His presence, and render Him their homage ! — *Med.* 188.

3. Consider that what should excite us to great respect and devotion in the holy place, is the thought that God is pleased there to grant us His favours and graces with a most particular mercy and liberality. — *Med.* 188.

4. It is in the church that God receives the prodigal child with open arms; it is there that the Good Shepherd brings back to His fold the lost sheep; it is there that the afflicted find consolation and the sick their cure; it is there that the weak receive new strength, and they that are tempted, new help against their enemies; it is there, finally, that God listens most favourably to the prayers offered to Him, and fills those with His graces who have recourse to His goodness. — *Med.* 188.

5. Let us renew our resolution to conduct ourselves with so much respect in church, that we may be worthy there to receive and feel within us all the effects of the divine mercy. — *Med.* 188.

II. THE RESPECT OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR CHURCHES.

The holy priest wished that all places destined for prayer should be clean, and never entered without respect. He liked to see them decorated, the altars well dressed, and that the magnificence of the sanctuary should sustain the idea of the greatness of God who is there adored and of the mysteries there worked.

The same spirit of religion inspired him with great veneration for all other holy things, for relics, sacred vessels, pictures, and for everything else separated

from the profane by some special blessing, especially holy water, which he used continually, a practice which is consecrated among the Brothers as a holy custom.

On feast days and days for celebrating the mysteries of Our Lord, he himself helped in dressing the altars with much zeal and joy: he was careful to arrange in an orderly manner even the least things. He required of those who served Mass the greatest spirit of faith, and sensible evidence of their piety with regard to the least ceremonies. On the eves of solemn feasts, he would sometimes go to the chapel to see whether the altar, the ornaments and everything else was in order and well arranged. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. III.





XXIV

EMPLOYMENT

I. ESTEEM FOR ONE'S EMPLOYMENT AND MEANS OF EXERCISING IT WELL.

1. You have the happiness of working for the instruction of the poor and of being attached to an employment which is esteemed and honoured only by those who have a Christian spirit. Appreciate this favour, and thank God for having placed you in a state which is so sanctifying and so useful for the sanctification of others. — *Med.* 113.

2. Your employment does not consist only in making your disciples Christian, but in making them truly Christian; and this is so much the more useful to them that it would be of little advantage to them to have received Baptism, if they did not live up to the spirit of Christianity. — *Med.* 171.

3. Your employment would be of little use, if you had not in view the salvation of souls as its object. Do you aim at this in everything you do? — *Med.* 148.

4. It often happens that employments which are but little esteemed by men are nevertheless productive of more fruit than the most honourable. Look on yours as one of the most important and excellent in the Church, because it is one of the most capable of holding her up by giving her a solid foundation in the Christian education of youth. — *Med.* 155.

5. You have an employment that is honourable before God, whose kingdom it serves to extend; love its abjection, and receive with joy the contempt you meet with from men, for the kingdom of God whom you serve and in whom you hope is not of this world. — *Med.* 143.

6. You have special need of zeal for souls in your employment; ask it earnestly of God. — *Med.* 119.

7. You cannot render yourself capable of working to advantage in your employment except by retirement and prayer; these are the means which are necessary to detach you altogether from the world and the inclination to sin, and to consecrate yourself entirely to God. — *Med.* 161.

8. You exercise an employment which places you under the obligation of touching hearts; now, you can do this only through the Holy Ghost. Ask of God to give you the same grace which He granted His Apostles, and that, after having filled you with His spirit

for your own sanctification, He may also communicate it to you for the sanctification of others. — *Med.* 43.

9. One of the best means you can employ in order to succeed in your employment is to have a very special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, and to instill it into the hearts of those who are confided to you. — *Med.* 150.

10. You are in an employment that requires great zeal ; but this zeal would be of little use if it did not produce any effect in the hearts of your pupils. For this purpose it is necessary that it should be produced by the love of God residing in you. — *Med.* 171.

11. If, as you should be, you are full of faith and the spirit of God in your employment, you will make true Christians of your pupils ; that is, they will not only bear the name of Christians, but they will be such in spirit and conduct, and be admired for their piety. — *Med.* 134.

12. If you thoroughly have the spirit of your state, God will make you find therein all sorts of consolations, and that even in your trials. — *Med.* 109.

13. In your employment, you should join zeal for the welfare of the Church to that for the good of the state, of which your pupils begin to be members, and should become more perfectly so every day. — *Med.* 160.

14. We must uphold the interests of God

with truly Christian firmness and generosity ; to this you are obliged in your employment. — *Med.* 102.

15. Do not be surprised if you meet with pain and contradiction in the exercise of your employment ; the more you suffer therein, the better you should endeavour to discharge your duties, being convinced that God will then bestow on your labours the most abundant blessings. — *Med.* 126.

16. Do not discriminate between the particular duties of your state and those which refer to your salvation and perfection. — *Collection.*

17. Be convinced that you will never effect your salvation more assuredly and acquire greater perfection, than by well fulfilling the duties of your state, provided you do so with the view of doing the will of God. — *Collection.*

II. M. GENSE PRAISES THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.

It is impossible to express what esteem M. Gense had for the Institute of St. John Baptist De La Salle. He spoke of it as so honourable and praiseworthy, that he aroused the desire of entering it, and inspired even those who had already embraced it with a most noble idea of their vocation. He encouraged them to perform its duties, he animated them to bear its pains, and by making himself their defender in persecution, he taught them to bear it with patience and joy.

Among other things he said to them : “ You are entering into the field of the Father of the family,

and if you have not been the first to be invited to labour therein, you are at least called to cultivate the most abandoned portion. You are like those gleaners who follow the reapers to gather up here and there the corn that was neglected and trodden under foot. Your consolation is that the quantity is so great, that you can gather it up in armfuls and fill the granary of the heavenly Father. " — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. II. Chap. XVI.



THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

1. THE NECESSITY OF FAITH.

1. Faith should be the light and guide of every Christian, to lead and direct him in the way of salvation. This is why St. Paul tells us : *The just man*, that is the true Christian, *liveth by faith* ;¹ because he is guided, and his actions are regulated by views and motives of faith. — *Collection*.

2. Faith is the foundation of our hope, and consequently, the knowledge of it that each one should have is of the highest importance in religion. — *Med.* 199.

3. Let yours be a *faith that worketh by charity* ;² let it detach you from all things ; carefully keep yourself disposed to lose all rather than God ; to abandon all rather than His known will ; and to sacrifice all — honour, health and life — for God's glory and interests, thus imitating Jesus Christ who says : *If any man will come after me, let him deny*

1. Rom. I. 17.

2. Gal. V. 6.

*himself, and take up his cross and follow me.*¹ — *Collection.*

4. It is in vain that you believe what Jesus Christ lays down in the Gospel, if your actions do not correspond with this teaching ; *for faith without works is dead* ². — *Med.* 84.

II. THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

1. The spirit of faith is a spirit which in all things is regulated and guided by the maxims and sentiments of faith, taken especially from Holy Scripture. — *Collection.*

2. The spirit of faith is a participation of the spirit of God within us, which makes us regulate and conduct ourselves in all things by sentiments of faith and the maxims which faith teaches ; hence, let all your care be to acquire it, so that *you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.* ³ — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. II.

3. Let your chief care be to conduct yourself by the spirit of faith and not by caprice, mood or inclination, nor by the customs of people of the world, or even by reason ; but by faith and the words of Our Lord, making them the rule of your whole conduct. — *Letters.*

1. Matt. XVI. 24.

2. James. II. 26.

3. Ephes. VI. 16.

III. THE FIRST EFFECT OF THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

1. The spirit of faith should produce three effects in those who possess it : the first is not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith ; the second is not to do anything but in view of God ; and the third is to attribute all to God. — *Collection.*

2. The first effect of the spirit of faith is to attach ourselves strongly to the knowledge, love and imitation of Our Lord, and to union with Him ; to the knowledge, since *this is eternal life*;¹ to the love, since *if any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema*;² to the imitation, since *whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son*;³ to union, since Our Lord says : *I am the vine, you the branches : if any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither.*⁴ — *Collection.*

3. The more you adopt simple views of faith, the more you will enter into that state of simplicity of action and conduct in which God wishes you to be. — *Letters.*

4. I am very glad that you are now living in more peace and in the spirit of faith. You

1. John. XVII. 3.

2. I Cor. XVI. 22.

3. Rom. VIII. 29.

4. John. XV. 5. 6.

have reason to say that in this spirit things are seen otherwise than they appear without looking higher. — *Letters*.

5. The saints see God clearly and in His own nature, and we enjoy Him only by faith ; but this view of faith gives so much pleasure and joy to the soul that loves its God, that it has in this life a foretaste of the delights of heaven. — *Med.* 70.

6. A soul penetrated with sentiments of faith is so exalted in God, that it no longer knows anything but God, no longer esteems anything but God, and has no relish for anything but God. Hence it can apply itself only to God, because, being enlightened by supernatural light, it no longer has any taste for the things of this world, and cannot look upon them any longer but with contempt. Endeavour to place yourself in similar dispositions. — *Med.* 32.

IV. THE SECOND EFFECT OF THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

1. The second effect the spirit of faith should produce in those who possess it, is not to do anything but in view of God. — *Collection*.

2. Not to do anything but in view of God is to keep our attention fixed upon God when doing anything, and to make Him the principle and the end of all that we do. — *Collection*.

3. Keeping our attention fixed upon God means to think actually of the presence of God. — *Collection.*

4. Making God the principle of all we do is to look upon Him as the prime author and mover of what we do, and to act only by the guidance of His divine Spirit. — *Collection.*

5. Making God the end of all we do is to perform all our actions for the glory of God and solely to please Him. — *Collection.*

V. THE THIRD EFFECT OF THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

1. The third effect which the spirit of faith should produce in those who possess it, is to attribute all to God. — *Collection.*

2. To attribute all to God is to accept both good and evil as coming from His hands, saying for example, with Job : *The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord.*¹ — *Collection.*

3. Be faithful to do everything that God requires of you, considering that it is by His orders that you must conduct yourself in all things. — *Med. 6.*

4. You should, under all circumstances, show that you depend on God, and that, at the first indication of His will, you are prepared to go where He calls you. — *Med. 6.*

1. Job. I. 21.

5. You should be convinced that in order to discharge the duties of your ministry, you should have no human views therein, but concern yourself only with what may contribute to your procuring the salvation of the souls entrusted to you, that is, to do the good which is the end of your state and employment. Is it thus that you act? — *Med.* 107.

VI. MEANS OF ACQUIRING THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

There are seven principal means by which we may acquire the spirit of faith and conduct ourselves by this spirit : the *first* is to have a profound respect for the Holy Scriptures ; the *second* is to animate all our actions with sentiments of faith ; the *third* is to have in view in all things solely the orders and the will of God ; the *fourth* is to have great control over our senses ; the *fifth* is to exercise great watchfulness over ourselves, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive ; the *sixth* is to pay as much attention as we can to the holy presence of God, and to renew it from time to time ; the *seventh* is to banish from our minds all vain thoughts and ideas that might withdraw us from these practices. — *Collection.*

VII. FAITH IS NECESSARY FOR THE EFFICACY
OF THE APOSTOLATE.

1. Be convinced that in your state you will contribute to the good of the Church but inasmuch as you will be filled with faith, and be guided by the spirit of faith, which is the spirit of your state, and with which therefore, you should be animated. — *Med.* 139.

2. Your faith should be in you as a bright light everywhere guiding you, and which will shine in the eyes of those whom you instruct, to direct them in the road to heaven. — *Med.* 178.

3. You should consider yourselves as the depositaries of the faith in order to communicate it; this is the talent that God has entrusted to you, and of which He has made you the stewards. — *Med.* 61.

4. Have you such faith as will touch the hearts of your pupils and inspire them with a Christian spirit? This is the greatest miracle that you can perform, and that which God requires of you, since it is the object of your employment. — *Med.* 139.

5. Faith should actuate you so that it may be seen by your conduct that you are true disciples of Jesus Christ, having but God in view in your actions, and boldly announcing

the maxims of the Gospel. And what should fortify your zeal as well as your faith is that you announce them as ministers of God. — *Med.* 87.

6. Engage your disciples to unite all their actions to those of Jesus Christ, so that being sanctified by His merits and by His unction, they may be agreeable to God and become for them a means of salvation. — *Med.* 195.

VIII. THE SPIRIT OF FAITH OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

St. John Baptist De La Salle was one of the just of his age who best expressed Jesus Christ in themselves, and were most abundantly filled with His spirit. There were hardly any among them who could more justly apply to themselves the words of St. Paul : *I live in the faith of the Son of God.*¹ St. John Baptist De La Salle looked upon things only with the eyes of faith : he judged of them only by this supernatural light ; he valued them only as faith values them, he esteemed only those which it esteems ; he desired only what faith promises ; he despised only what it despises ; he feared only what it teaches us to fear ; he loved only what it showed to be amiable. Always raised above the false ideas the world inspires ; always distrustful of the spirit of nature and human wisdom ; always on his guard against the deceits of self-love and personal interest ; always victorious over the false maxims and customs of the world, he studied in everything the Gospel, the life, the sentiments and virtues of Jesus Christ, and in practice, made them the sole rule of his conduct.

The spirit of faith made him find marvelous taste

in the magnificent eulogium which St. Paul made of the faith of the ancient patriarchs, and the prophets and saints of the Old Law in the celebrated chapter XI of his Epistle to the Hebrews. When it was read in the refectory, he appeared to be enraptured and gave it extraordinary attention. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. II.



THE GOSPEL, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

I. ADVANTAGES DERIVED FROM THE STUDY
AND MEDITATION OF THE GOSPEL.

1. It is from the Gospel that you should take the truths which you are bound to teach your pupils in order to instill into them the spirit of Christianity. Hence, nourish your soul daily with the holy maxims which are contained in this divine book, and make yourself familiar with it by frequent meditation. — *Med.* 159.

2. You have the happiness and advantage of frequently reading and hearing the Holy Scriptures; you should therefore learn the science of salvation and the holy maxims which your profession obliges you to practise and teach to others. Meditate on them from time to time, and let them also be the subjects of your usual conversation. — *Med.* 100.

3. How admirable and useful it is for those who wish to live piously and in the exercise of virtue to meditate frequently on the holy and sublime maxims contained in Holy Scrip-

ture! They are above all that the human mind can conceive by itself. — *Med.* 192.

4. Often meditate on the Holy Scriptures in order to encourage yourself to do good and to live up to the spirit of your state; for, the word of God, which is contained therein, produces this effect according to St. Paul, because it is *living and efficacious, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching into the division of the soul and the spirit.*¹ Make use of it therefore for this purpose, since it procures such great advantages. — *Med.* 192.

5. If you wish to be filled with the spirit of God and quite capable for your employment, make the books of Holy Scripture, and especially the New Testament, your special study, in order that they serve as a rule of conduct for yourself and those whom you instruct. — *Med.* 170.

II. THE DISPOSITIONS WITH WHICH WE SHOULD READ THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. Read the Holy Scriptures with the most profound respect; reverence even the least syllable; read them with a submissive spirit; practise what you understand, adore what you do not understand; and, if you wish to know

5. Heb. IV. 12.

their meaning, ask those who are able to explain them. — *Collection.*

2. Your employment requires you to practise the maxims of the Gospel: read it therefore often with affection; let it be your principal study, but above all, put it in practice. — *Med. 171.*

3. Apply yourself to the study of the Gospel in which are laid down the most holy maxims of our divine Master and the principal foundations of Christian piety. The more you apply yourself to this study, the more learned will you become in the science of the saints, and the better prepared to instruct others. — *Med. 167.*

4. You are in a state in which you should thoroughly know the maxims of the Gospel, both to labour for your own sanctification and to procure that of others. Do you know them? Have you renounced the goods and pleasures of this world? It often happens that we have not the goods and conveniences of life, because the state in which we are engaged does not permit us to enjoy them; it is sometimes those who have them least who desire them most ardently; are you not perhaps of this number? — *Med. 166.*

5. Is your principal care therefore that of instructing your disciples in the maxims of the holy Gospel and the practice of Christian vir-

tues ? Have you nothing more at heart than to attach them thereto ? Do you look upon the good you endeavour to do them as the foundation of all the virtues they will practise during the course of their lives ? Because the habits of virtue cultivated in youth meeting with less obstacles in corrupt nature, strike deeper root in the hearts of those in whom they have been formed in early youth. — *Med.* 194.

III. THE PRACTICE AND TEACHING OF THE MAXIMS OF THE GOSPEL.

1. You are obliged to teach these holy maxims to the children with whose instruction you are entrusted ; you should therefore be penetrated with them in order to impress them deeply on their hearts. Be docile therefore to the Holy Ghost, who can give you a knowledge of them, and in a short time. — *Med.* 14.

2. Be solicitous only to nourish your soul with the maxims of the Gospel, endeavouring to practise them, and occupying yourself with so much affection with what concerns your spiritual advancement, as not to be solicitous about the wants of your body. — *Med.* 59.

3. Are you careful to become well acquainted with the maxims contained in the Gospel and to meditate on them frequently, in order

to be able to inspire those with them who are entrusted to you ? Your first care should be to instruct them so well in the doctrine of the holy apostles that they may know it all ; to give them the spirit of religion and piety, and to make them practise the teachings which Our Lord has left us in the holy Gospel. — *Med.* 116.

4. How do you show that you have the spirit of Christianity ? Rest assured that in order to have it, it is necessary that your actions do not belie the faith that you profess, but that they be the constant practice of what is expressed in the Gospel. — *Med.* 84.

5. It is in vain for you to believe what Jesus Christ has laid down in the Gospel, if your actions do not confirm your belief, because faith without works is dead. Manifest also by them that you conduct yourself like the children of those who have been instructed in the truths of faith by the holy Apostles. — *Med.* 84.

6. Let us fear to be lost in attaching ourselves to maxims which lead to relaxation, we, whom God has called to live up to the perfection of the Gospel. — *Med.* 5.

7. Are you ready like the primitive Christians to die in confessing your faith ? Would you not, on the contrary, be disposed to lose the grace of God and heaven to be exempted from suffering ? — *Med.* 84.

IV. THE ESTEEM OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
FOR THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

All that the servant of God possessed was a New Testament, an *Imitation of Christ*, a crucifix and a Rosary. Not allowing anything else to his disciples, he did not wish to have anything more himself. When, however, it was represented to him that his room (if indeed the wretched recess where he usually kept himself deserved the name) was too bare, he would answer : " Are we not very rich to possess the Gospel and to draw therefrom the words of eternal life at pleasure ? Did not this constitute all the riches of the ancient solitaires and the mine from which they drew forth the treasures of virtue that so much enriched them ? " — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XIX.





XXVII

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

I. CONSIDERATIONS ON THE EXAMINATION.

1. It is impossible to overcome ourselves without knowing ourselves, and it is very difficult to know ourselves in the midst of the world. Do we avail ourselves of the advantages we enjoy in being withdrawn from it by endeavouring to thwart the inclinations of nature in everything? — *Med.* 97.

2. Let the practice of examination be quite frequent and familiar. Besides the usual daily examinations, make a short one at the end of each exercise, such as mental prayer, the Office, Holy Mass, the meals, etc., to see whether you have omitted anything necessary for their proper performance, and what faults you may have committed. — *Collection.*

3. Are you more recollected, more filled with horror of sin after your examination than before? If not, this is a bad sign. — *Collection.*

4. Consider of what moment it is to make your examination of conscience and confession well, since they are the remedies for our spiritual ills, and since they do not act as remedies, unless we perform them with all possible exactitude, and with holy dispositions of heart.

— *Collection.*

5. Besides the examination of your daily faults, you should make a particular one on some single defect or virtue, before dinner.

— *Collection.*

6. Take only a single defect at a time for your particular examination, and that for a number of days in succession. — *Letters.*

II. THE MANNER OF MAKING THE EXAMINATION.

You should make all examinations according to the five points prescribed by St. Ignatius :
 1. Implore the assistance of the Holy Ghost ;
 2. Thank God for His benefits ; 3. Seriously seek the faults committed ; 4. Conceive sentiments of sorrow, shame and confusion for them ; 5. Take some good resolution and determine the means to render it effectual.

As sorrow and confusion with a firm resolution are the essential parts of the examination, we should usually dwell upon these two points at greater length than upon the others.

— *Collection.*

III. — HOW ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE STUDIED TO KNOW HIMSELF.

St. John Baptist De La Salle endeavoured to know himself perfectly from what the world said of him. Not hearing anything but what was to his disadvantage, he learned to despise himself and to divest himself of that good opinion, of that secret and inordinate esteem, of that pernicious desire to be honoured that we have inherited from our first parents, and which Baptism did not efface. The more deeply he reflected on what the world said about him, the more reason he found to humble himself; even in the blackest calumnies and the most shameful impostures, he found a certain amount of truth which obliged him to acknowledge that those who spoke ill of him did not do it sufficiently, and if they were to see in his natural inclinations all that he saw himself, they would redouble their contempt. — *Spirit and Virtues*.

IV. THE FORETHOUGHT OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

He says in his regulation: "In the morning, I shall take a quarter of an hour to foresee what I shall have to do, in order to do it well; to foresee the occasions in which I may be exposed to fail, in order to prevent it, and I shall take precautions for my conduct during the day. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XII.





XXVIII

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

I. FIDELITY TO SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.

1. Be very exact in leaving everything as soon as the bell rings to call you to some exercise, and let nothing prevent you from doing so. It is to such fidelity that God usually attaches many graces. — *Letters*.

2. Religious who love their state find only pleasure and satisfaction in all the exercises of piety they perform, because they have acquired a habit which the unction of grace and the love of God have rendered sweet and agreeable to them. — *Med.* 180.

3. Are all your exercises dear to you? Do you look on them as absolutely necessary means to reach the perfection of your state, and consequently to assure your salvation? Have you left everything at the first sound of the bell, even when you were engaged with persons from without? This you must always do without fail, because it is usually by the first sound of the bell you hear that the will of God is made known to you. — *Med.* 92.

4. To have God in view in your exercises is what will help you most to perform them well. — *Letters.*

5. Apply yourself to your exercises in such a manner that you may not have to say that having begun by the spirit, you finished by the flesh, that is, in a manner entirely natural. — *Letters.*

6. You should be careful not to be indolent in your exercises ; God would not bless you. There is no virtue without doing violence to ourselves, and it does not suffice to be energetic sometimes only ; our virtue must be solid ; it is not by taking or looking for our ease that we acquire it. — *Letters.*

7. When you have made your exercises regularly, you will soon have no more trouble. It is necessary to do yourself violence for a time for the love of God. — *Letters.*

8. Endeavour to apply yourself well to your exercises, because they will sanctify you and lead you to God. — *Letters.*

9. You will draw down the grace of God on yourself in performing your exercises with love and to the best of your ability. — *Letters.*

10. The degree of fidelity to the exercises and practices of the community is what constitutes so great a difference between a number of persons in the same community and under the same Rules. They live in the same way,

they have the same exercises and do the same things ; and yet, there are hardly two alike in conduct and in the practice of the community virtues. The reason is because their fidelity is not alike. — *Letters*.

11. Bear well in mind the following maxims which will help you to acquire the holy virtue of fidelity :

First, to reflect that we must serve God at all times with the same fidelity, because He is always the same and does not change.

Second, that we should never lose a moment in the service of God, because, as Our Lord tells us, a time will come when no one shall be able to do anything more for his salvation. — *Letters*.

II. SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AS A MEANS OF THE APOSTOLATE

1. You have exercises established for your own sanctification ; but, if you are animated with an ardent zeal for the salvation of those whose instruction is entrusted to you, you will not fail in performing your exercises, to do so for this intention. In acting thus, you will draw down on yourself the graces necessary to contribute to the salvation of souls, and God will take care of your own ; keep yourself in these dispositions in future. — *Med.* 205.

2. Since you are called to contribute to the salvation of souls in your state, your holiness

should be above the average, because it is you who are to communicate holiness to them both by example and by the words of salvation you should announce to them. Interior application to mental prayer, affection for your exercises, fidelity to perform them well and to enter into all the community practices, will help you to acquire that holiness and that perfection which God wishes you to have. Earnestly pray for it every day, and have it so much at heart, that you will not cease from praying for it until you have obtained it. — *Med.* 39.

III. THE FIDELITY OF OUR HOLY FOUNDER TO THE COMMUNITY EXERCISES.

St. John Baptist De La Salle punctually performed every exercise in its time, diligently going to the place in which it was to be performed, leaving everything at the first sound of the bell as the voice of God, even stopping at a half-uttered word or a half-formed letter in imitation of those solitaries eulogized by Cassian, whose punctuality subsequently served as a model of perfect obedience. He was very faithful to this even in his most pressing occupations. Unless they were of the greatest importance and would suffer no delay, he left everything notwithstanding the remonstrances of those who wished to stop him and whom he silenced by answering that “nothing was preferable to the exact observance of the will of God.” — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XII.





XXIX

GRACE

I. FIDELITY TO GRACE.

1. Be very faithful to grace, never neglecting to correspond with any movement thereof. — *Med.* 180.

2. It is often on prompt fidelity to grace that salvation and the happiness of souls depend. — *Med.* 96.

3. The more faithful you are to the grace of Jesus Christ, the more will God bless your labours. — *Med.* 7.

4. Have you been disposed not to render the grace of God vain in you? Doubtless it has been useless whenever your actions have not been performed for the love of Him. — *Med.* 90.

5. Do you correspond with all the movements of grace as St. Paul did, and are you as zealous to fulfil the duties of your employment? Do you say with him: *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* ¹ And are you docile to all that you know that God requires of you? — *Med.* 99.

1. Acts. IX. 6.

6. Let us pray to Jesus to be pleased to visit us, and to work in us some *miracle of grace* by inducing us to do violence to ourselves to practise some virtue, above all that for which we have the most repugnance. — *Med.* 141.

7. I entreat you, dear Brother, to pray to God to touch your heart and render you docile to His guidance; endeavour to please Him by your actions. — *Letters.*

8. What you should principally strive for is to be faithful to the inspirations you receive to overcome yourself; this is a sign that they come from God. — *Letters.*

9. The first effect that should be produced in you by the inspirations that God gives is an entire detachment from all earthly things. Another effect that they should produce in the soul is an interior taste for God, which will make us seek only Him and give ourselves entirely to Him. — *Med.* 125.

II. THE MEANS OF OBTAINING GRACE.

1. Do you endeavour to be very regular in your community? This is the true means of obtaining the graces necessary to fulfil the duties of your state well, and to acquit yourself of the ministry to which God has called you. — *Med.* 131.

2. The more faithful and exact you are in observing your Rules, the more graces will God lavish on you, and the more taste will He give you for your state. — *Med.* 104.

3. Apply yourself attentively and with fervour to mental prayer, in order to be filled with grace. — *Med.* 42.

4. If you wish to receive God's graces, especially those which He grants to His chosen ones, be thankful when He proves and afflicts you, for, as the Apostle says : *The Lord scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.* ¹ — *Med.* 177.

5. If you wish to render yourself worthy of being employed in saving souls, be detached from all things, and God's graces will be given you in abundance both for yourself and for others. — *Med.* 177.

6. Prayer and the privation of sensual pleasures are very efficacious means to obtain from God all the graces we need. — *Med.* 157.

7. You have the happiness of being visited by God in meditation every day, and very often by Our Lord in Holy Communion ; see that these visits are not in vain, but that both obtain abundant graces for you which will always make you acquire some virtue, and tend in a particular manner to perfection. — *Med.* 141.

1. Heb. XII. 6.

8. Understand that what testifies the greatest love for God is to suffer with pleasure something to please Him and to become conformable to Jesus crucified ; it is also thus that you will draw down on yourself the most abundant graces of God. — *Med.* 130.





XXX

GRATUITOUS TEACHING AND POOR CHILDREN

I. ESTEEM, AFFECTION AND DEVOTEDNESS TO POOR CHILDREN.

1. Being instituted under the protection of the Most Holy Infant Jesus and the patronage of St. Joseph, they should make it their chief care to teach children, especially poor children, those things which pertain to a good and Christian life ; that zeal for the education of youth in accordance with the standard of Christian law should be the special characteristic, and so to speak, the spirit of their Institute. — *Bull of Approbation*.

2. You have the advantage of being employed especially in the instruction of the poor ; you should, in accordance with the spirit of your Institute, think much more of them than of the rich ; you should also live poor and disengaged from everything in order to resemble them in some respects. — *Med.* 143.

3. The faith with which you should be animated, should make you honour Jesus Christ in the person of poor children and make you

prefer them to the rich of this world, because they are, more than these, the living images of your divine Master. — *Med.* 80.

4. In order to acquit yourself well of your employment, have much love for the poor, because the principal function that you exercise is that of instructing them. Look upon them as the images of Jesus Christ, and as being best disposed to receive His spirit. Be convinced that the more you love and devote yourself to them, the more you will belong to Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 173.

5. Show, by your care of poor children, that they are really dear to you ; and ask of God a great love of the poor, especially, great zeal to inculcate purity, a virtue so difficult to preserve in an age so corrupt as ours. — *Med.* 80.

6. Let faith animate you to exercise your mission with regard to children with affection and zeal, because they are the members of Jesus Christ. It is thus that Our Lord will be pleased with you, and that you will assuredly find Him, because He always loved poverty and the poor. — *Med.* 196.

7. You are obliged by your state to instruct poor children ; do you love them ? Do you honour Jesus Christ in their person, and with this view, do you prefer them to those who are in easier circumstances ? Do you think more of them than of the rich ? — *Med.* 133.

8. You cannot be too disinterested in your employment, because it is the poor whom you have to instruct; teach them by your example; and, in order to teach them how to love poverty, let disinterestedness make you practise it as far as it may please God. — *Med.* 153.

9. You are obliged to instruct the children of the poor; you should consequently be very kind to them, and promote their spiritual welfare as far as possible, looking on them as the members of Jesus Christ and as His well-beloved children. — *Med.* 80.

10. Love the poor; God requires of you not to give them corporal but spiritual alms which are so much superior, as the life of the body is nothing in comparison with that of the soul, which is immortal. — *Med.* 137.

11. When we have made ourselves voluntarily poor in order to imitate Jesus Christ, we also love, as He did, those whom God has made poor. You have poor children to instruct every day. Love them tenderly, thus imitating the example of Jesus Christ. Prefer them to those who are not poor, because Our Lord does not say that the Gospel is preached to the rich, but to the poor. — *Med.* 166.

12. Are you penetrated with sentiments of charity and tenderness for the poor children whom you have to bring up, and do you avail yourself of the affection they have for you to lead them to God? If you exercise towards

them the firmness of a father in order to prevent them from falling into or withdrawing them from disorder, you should also have for them the kindness of a mother, in order to attach them to your lessons, and do them all the good that depends on you. — *Med.* 101.

II. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOUNDER OF GRATUITOUS SCHOOLS.

St. John Baptist established gratuitous schools, and opened them to those whom poverty excluded from the then existing schools ; he discovered the secret for making them flourishing and numerous.

Charity, which is the soul of the Christian schools, gives them a great advantage over pay schools ; they are better managed and kept in better discipline ; and children find in the Brothers what they do not find in schoolmasters, Christian education combined with instruction, because these two kinds of lessons are inseparable in their schools. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XV.





XXXI

HUMILITY

• I. THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY.

1. Look upon humility as the foundation of all the moral virtues, without which there can be no solid piety, since piety, without humility, is usually pure hypocrisy or illusion. — *Collection.*

2. Humility is a virtue of which you stand much in need in your vocation. Rest assured that the more humble you are, the more graces you will receive. — *Med.* 142.

3. Your community may be useful to the Church ; but rest assured that it will be so only on condition of its being based on piety and humility, because these are the two foundations that will render it immovable. — *Med.* 161.

4. Do you not know that we are destined to be despised and persecuted ? This is a thing we must all expect when we enter into the service of God. But what a happiness to suffer something for Him who has suffered so much for us ! And do you not know that what pleases

God is, that for His love, we endure the ills we are made to suffer ? — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XX.

5. One of the things which most contributes to make us practise virtue is the contempt of ourselves, for, the Wise Man says: *Pride is the beginning of all sin*,¹ to which we may add, the good opinion we have of ourselves. There is no one therefore, how holy soever he may appear or how much prevented by grace, who should not despise himself and everything relating to himself. What contempt does he not deserve whose being does not belong to himself but to God, who gave it to him and who can take it away from him and thus annihilate him if He wishes ! Can there be any esteem for him whose life is but sin, and who, of himself can never rise from it ? This is however your case, and yet to listen to you, you are something. Do not imitate the Pharisee who, instead of praying, thought only of praising and thanking himself. — *Med.* 63.

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY.

1. One reason for which God grants everything to those who pray is the humility with which they ask for what they need ; because, as the Scripture says : *God resisteth the proud*

1. Ecclus. X.

and giveth grace to the humble, ¹ that is, that He grants nothing to the former, but to the latter He refuses nothing. This Our Lord made evident in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, who prayed together in the temple, and of whom the latter *went down into his house justified rather than the other, because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* ² As if He had said, that the prayer of the first mentioned had not been heard because it was accompanied with sentiments of pride, and that the second, notwithstanding the many sins he had committed, had them all forgiven and returned justified, because of the humility and contrition with which he had appeared before God. — *Med.* 38.

2. We are happy in this world only inasmuch as we are humble, submissive and patient. — *Letters.*

3. The more humble we are, the greater things will God do in us. — *Med.* 79.

4. If you wish to convert and win your disciples easily to God, be children as they are, *not in sense but in malice,* ³ says St. Paul. The more insignificant you make yourself, the happier you will be to be thought such, the

1. Jas. IV. 6.

2. Luke. XVIII. 14.

3. I Cor. XIV. 20.

more will you cherish persecution and humiliation, but the more also will you touch the hearts of those whom you instruct and make them lead truly Christian lives. — *Med.* 79.

III. THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY.

1. In order to acquire humility, we must strive to know ourselves : 1. What we have been in the past as to body and soul ; 2. What we now are ; 3. What we shall be in the future ; 4. The nothingness whence we have sprung, the sins we have committed, God's anger that we have provoked, and hell that we have deserved. — *Collection.*

2. Considering yourself in the light of faith, make account only of what may inspire you with lowly sentiments of yourself before God and man. — *Med.* 63.

3. Endeavour to be humble, since there is nothing in you but what is lowly and humiliating, and be convinced that in order to acquire this virtue, you should accept with joy and even seek humiliations ; because they are the most suitable and the surest means to acquire this virtue. — *Med.* 108.

4. Often recall to mind and convince yourself that you are the weakest and most imperfect of all men ; that nothing save your pride, can make you think differently ; and whatever

wicked man you may hear of, consider him far above yourself. — *Collection*.

5. Have a lowly opinion of yourself, consider that you are worthless, and that God uses you as a vile instrument, fit in itself, only to draw down His malediction. — *Collection*.

6. Always bear in mind what you can do of yourself and what you have done when the Almighty has left you to yourself. Consider that of yourself you are capable only of losing yourself, and be apprehensive even as to what you consider your best actions. — *Collection*.

7. They shall always prefer their Brothers to themselves in all things, as far as the Rules and obedience allow, in view of the esteem they have for them, and of the respect they have for God residing in them. Hence, if anything is presented to all the Brothers, or to any other and themselves, and they are free to choose, they shall take that which is least, considering their Brothers far superior to themselves. — *Rules*, Chap. XIII.

8. Shun the praise and approbation of men, and, if you hear anything said to your advantage, think that all honour is due only to God, while you deserve only confusion. — *Collection*.

9. We should be disposed to receive humiliations in a spirit of simplicity. — *Letters*.

10. Let us love what is most lowly in our

profession, in order to share in some respects in the abjection of Jesus in His birth. — *Med.* 86.

11. Humiliations should not appear strange to us ; we should become familiar with them ; they are always good for us. — *Letters.*

12. You will acquire many graces and stifle nature by overcoming the repugnance you have for humiliations. — *Letters.*

13. Humbly endure contempt and rebuffs as most just. — *Collection.*

14. Never say the least word that may raise you in the good opinion of others. — *Collection.*

15. Never be vain of what you have done, since it is God who by His goodness and grace is the author of all that is good in us. — *Med.* 63.

16. When you pray, let it be with so much humility that God may not be able to refuse you anything of what you ask for. — *Med.* 38.

17. We cannot go to excess in contempt of ourselves. St. Francis, as great a saint as he was, called himself the greatest sinner in this world ; others, in order that they might be despised, did foolish things. You who have crucified Our Lord by your sins, render yourself conformable to Him by sentiments of humility, and looking on yourself with the eyes of faith, mind only what may inspire you with lowly sentiments of yourself before God and man. — *Med.* 63.

IV. THE HUMILITY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

Full of the lowliest sentiments that humility could inspire, St. John Baptist De La Salle treated himself only with contempt. The history of his life seems that of the perfectly humble man, or a model of the practice of this virtue. He never spoke of himself nor of what regarded himself. He forgot so well what he had been, that he did not give the slightest occasion to suspect it. The silence of the holy priest on everything concerning himself was so profound and universal, that one might have lived in close intimacy with him for ten years, without hearing him say a word about his family, his place of birth, or his former condition : without learning anything redounding to his honour.

The lowest, the vilest and most mortifying offices suited his taste best, and these he loved least to relinquish. He was seen to wait at table, to wash dishes, to sweep, and to render to the sick the most abject and repulsive services.

Having divested himself of the office of superior, he wished to avail himself of all the advantages of the last place ; after gaining possession of it, he gave full scope to all exercises of abjection, dependence and humiliation. — *Spirit and Virtues.* — Chap. XX.



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

I. THE LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF HIS REIGN IN OUR HEARTS.

1. Rest assured that you will never become a true disciple of Our Lord until you love Him, and until you are ready to suffer everything for the love of Him. — *Med.* 102.

2. It is inconceivable how much Our Lord loves those who leave everything for love of Him, and how many graces He grants them both for themselves and others. As their hearts are void of the things of this world, He fills them with His Holy Spirit, because the more we leave for Him exteriorly the more He gives interiorly. — *Med.* 167.

3. You should show your great love for Jesus by assiduously conversing with Him in mental prayer, and by doing your utmost to receive Him in Holy Communion as often as possible. — *Med.* 144.

4. Often reflect that Jesus having given

Himself entirely to us and for us, we should also give ourselves entirely to Him, do everything for Him and not seek ourselves in anything. — *Med.* 88.

5. You offered yourself to God when you left the world. Did you then give yourself entirely to Him without reserving anything for yourself? Have you not since then withdrawn some part of your offering? You should not be satisfied with having offered yourself once to Our Lord; you should renew this offering every day, and consecrate your actions to Him by doing them only for Him. — *Med.* 104.

6. In order that Jesus may reign in your heart, you must offer Him the tribute of your actions, which should all be consecrated to Him, and act in such a manner that there may be nothing in them but what may be agreeable to Him, and have nothing in view in performing them but the accomplishment of His holy will, which should direct them all, in order that there may be nothing human in them. — *Med.* 12.

7. As the reign of Jesus Christ is divine, it is necessary that everything that relates to it be divine in itself, or made divine by its relation with Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 12.

8. In order that Jesus Christ may reign in your soul, you must, under His guidance, combat the enemies of your salvation, which are also His; for, as He wishes to establish in you

His peace, which, according to St. Paul, should be victorious in your soul, it is necessary for this purpose that He should overcome, and you also with His help, all that may be an obstacle thereto, such as your passions and evil inclinations ; and that, destroying in you the man of sin who has reigned there in the past, you may free yourself from the shameful slavery to which sin has reduced you. — *Med.* 22.

9. Abandon yourself entirely to the guidance of Our Lord, allowing Him to reign over all your interior movements in a manner so absolute on His part and so dependent on yours, that you may really be able to say, that it is no longer you who live but that it is Jesus Christ who liveth in you. — *Med.* 22.

II. THE IMITATION OF THE VIRTUES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE PRACTICE OF HIS MAXIMS.

1. The first effect of faith is to attach us strongly to the knowledge, love, imitation and union with Our Lord Jesus Christ : to the knowledge, since *this is eternal life* ;¹ to the love, since, *if any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* ;² to the imitation, since *whom he foreknew, he also*

1. John. XVII. 3.

2. 1 Cor. XVI. 22.

predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son ;¹ to the union, since Our Lord says : I am the vine : you the branches ; if any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither.² — Collection.

2. Attach yourself only to Jesus, to His doctrine and holy maxims, since He has conferred on you the honour of choosing you preferably to a great number of others, in order to announce them to children, who are His well beloved. — *Med* 107.

3. Are you attached to Our Lord in such a way that you no longer think of yourself ? Concern yourself only with nourishing your soul with the maxims of the holy Gospel, endeavouring to practise them, and being taken up with such affection for your spiritual advancement, as not to be uneasy about the wants of your body. — *Med*. 59.

4. The majority of Christians are more incredulous than St. Thomas, because they do not believe the teachings of Jesus Christ. Show by the conformity of your actions with His holy maxims that you really believe them, since you put them in practice. — *Med*. 84.

5. It is in vain that you believe what Our Lord teaches in the holy Gospel, if your actions

1. Rom. VIII. 29.

2. John. XV. 5, 6.

do not confirm your belief : because *faith without works is dead* ¹. — *Med.* 84.

6. You are daily with the poor, and you are entrusted by God with imbuing them with Jesus Christ Himself and His Spirit ; are you careful before undertaking this ministry to be so imbued yourself in order to be able to communicate this grace to them ? — *Med.* 189.

7. In what respects do you show that you have the spirit of Christianity ? Be convinced that in order to possess it, your actions must not belie the faith you profess, but that they be the constant practice of what is expressed in the holy Gospel. — *Med.* 84.

8. When assisting at Holy Mass, always unite interiorly with the dispositions of Our Lord when He offered Himself a victim for the glory of His Father. Always prepare and return thanks for the Holy Sacrifice. — *Collection.*

III. WE SHOULD MAKE OUR LORD KNOWN AND CAUSE HIM TO BE LOVED.

1. If you love Our Lord ardently, you will endeavour to instill His holy love into the hearts of the children whom you are training

up to be His disciples. Strive therefore to have them always think of Jesus their good and only Master ; to speak often of Him ; and to breathe only Jesus and for Jesus. — *Med.* 102.

2. As you are obliged to help your disciples to save themselves, you should induce them to unite all their actions to those of Our Lord, so that, being sanctified by His unction and His merits, they may be agreeable to God and become for them a means of salvation. It is thus that you will induce these children to profit by the death of Our Lord, the fruits and merits of which they will efficaciously apply to themselves. — *Med.* 195.

3. Consider the person of Our Lord in the Good Shepherd of the Gospel, who seeks the strayed sheep, places it on His shoulders, and brings it back to the fold ; and as you hold His place, consider yourself obliged to act in the same manner ; consequently, ask of Him the grace necessary to bring about the conversion of the hearts of your disciples. — *Med.* 196.

4. You, who in your state are doing the work of God, rest assured that He will have care of you, provided you serve Him with fidelity, and omit nothing of what He requires of you. — *Med.* 59.

5. Have much esteem for your employment which is apostolic, and carefully study the Gospel of St. Matthew, which contains the

most holy maxims of Our Lord and the principal foundations of Christian piety. The more you apply yourself to this study, the more learned will you become in the science of the saints, and the better prepared to instruct others. — *Med.* 167.

IV. THE LOVE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR JESUS CHRIST.

The love of St. John Baptist De La Salle for Our Lord was tender and affective, efficacious and effective. Dead to everything else, he seemed to have retained sensibility only for the *Beloved* of his soul, who absorbed all the tenderness of his heart. This love was shown by the most heroic actions and sacrifices. Everything we see in the course of his life justifies us in applying to him the words of St. Bonaventure in the life of St. Francis of Assisium: *The love of Jesus Christ set him all ablaze and had kindled in his soul so intense a fire, that all the waters of affliction and persecution could not extinguish it.* Jesus was his refuge, his study, his model and the delight of his heart.

All the advantages he had in this world never brought him any other pleasure than that of renouncing them for Jesus, his Lord.

It was very natural that, having left all things for Jesus Christ, he should have recourse to Him for consolation, joy and satisfaction. This he did without interruption and without growing weary. Everything became sweet to him at the feet of Our Lord, for, he there found the remedy for his ills or the strength to suffer them: he always arose content, because it was with new courage to suffer, with new attraction for the good pleasure of God, and with more entire resignation to the dispensations of Providence.

In everything and everywhere, he had recourse to Him, he remembered His presence, he took Him as his

model and endeavoured to live only for Him. In a word, the preoccupation of his life was to reproduce in himself the image of Jesus Christ.

His only recourse was to Jesus Christ : He was his only support. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVI.

V. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TAKES
OUR LORD AS HIS MODEL.

In taking Jesus Christ as his model, St. John Baptist De La Salle, not content with having some traits of resemblance to Him, made every effort to express Him most faithfully in his person, and to become a perfect copy of Him. In studying the virtues that shone with most lustre in holy priests, he imitated the most heroic to the letter, and became a great example to them. In a word, these words of God : *You shall be holy unto me, because I the Lord am holy,*¹ and those of Our Lord to His Apostles : *Be you therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect ;*² and : *For them do I sanctify myself,*³ were for the holy priest a continual subject of meditation and a source of inexhaustible reflections which inspired him with more and more taste for perfection, by showing him that of God, of Jesus Christ and of the saints, as a mirror in which he discovered what was wanting in his own, and what he had to acquire. Having the eyes of his soul always open to that supernatural light, he was seized with holy fear when he found himself so near to Jesus Christ, representing His person, exercising His functions, dispensing His mysteries, and at the same time so impure and sullied, in his own eyes, as he thought. Thus he dared not raise his eyes towards Him who is holy by essence. He remained abased, confounded, and anni-

1. Levit. XX. 26.

2. Matt. V. 48.

3. John. XVII. 19.

hilated without being able to cast his eyes elsewhere ; and the fear caused by the impression of the divine holiness now suspended all the powers of his soul, preventing their free exercise, and keeping them in silence through a profound sentiment of confusion and respect, and again putting them into motion by fervent sentiments of tenderness, love, gratitude and religion. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. IV.





XXXIII

SPIRITUAL READING

1. Spiritual reading, well made, helps to make us interior and to advance in virtue. — *Letters.*

2. Never begin reading without placing yourself in the presence of God ; say some short prayer to obtain light to understand and grace to practise what you read. — *Collection.*

3. Never read through curiosity and do not hurry to finish a book ; pause from time to time in order to relish what you read. When you can practise it, see why you do not do so. — *Collection.*

4. Read your spiritual book as you would a letter from Our divine Lord to make known His holy will. Above all read the Holy Scriptures with the most profound respect ; reverence even the least syllable, read them with a submissive spirit ; practise what you understand, adore what you do not understand ; and, if you wish to know their meaning, ask those who are able to explain them. — *Collection.*

5. Frequently review and strive to engrave

on your heart what you have most relished in spiritual reading. — *Collection.*

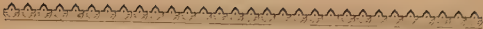
6. At the end of your spiritual reading, never fail to thank God for the truths you have most relished and retained, and beg of Him to help you to practise them. — *Collection.*

7. Curiosity and negligence are the two great hindrances to the spiritual profit which we should derive from hearing or reading the word of God. Have you not often fallen into one or the other of these faults? — *Collection.*

8. When you have read or heard the word of God, have you made a personal application thereof? Have you examined how far your exterior and interior conduct is in conformity or variance with the truths announced? — *Collection.*

9. As neither reading nor discourses of themselves touch the heart, but God Himself who employs these means, we must beseech Him to enable us to draw therefrom the fruit which He desires. Have you done so? — *Collection.*





XXXIV

RISING

1. Consider that the act of rising is so important, that the Holy Ghost has expressly enjoined in Holy Scripture to be most exact on this point, and never to discuss or examine whether we should rise at the appointed time and when the bell rings; as if He had said, that the matter being settled, our only thought should be to carry it out immediately. How do you act in this regard? — *Collection.*

2. As soon as you awake, think of God, and at the first sound of the bell, imagine that Jesus Christ addresses you in these words: *Rise thou that sleepest and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten thee.*¹ — *Collection.*

3. While dressing, your first thought should be of God or of praying to Him and adoring Him by some short but fervent prayer. How do you act in this matter? — *Collection.*

4. Dress quickly, thinking of God; while dressing, beg Him to clothe you with His Spirit, saying from the bottom of your heart:

1. Ephes. V. 14.

*Clothe me with the new man, who according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth.*¹ — *Collection.*

5. When fully dressed, remain in annihilation before God ; acknowledge Him to be your Creator and Sovereign Lord, who gives you life and preserves it only that you may employ it in His service. — *Collection.*

6. Faithfully observe silence till the hour for mental prayer ; sigh for the time at which it will begin ; resolve from this moment to be very exact and punctual in all the community exercises ; for, fidelity in all the exercises of the day often depends upon this first act and resolution. — *Collection.*

II. EXACTITUDE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE IN THE MATTER OF RISING.

In the first years of his Institute, St. John Baptist De La Salle secretly passed the nights before the Most Blessed Sacrament and at the tomb of St. Remigius, whilst his Brothers took their rest ; so that the latter, seeing him the first at prayer in the morning, could not think that he had consecrated to prayer the hours he had taken from his repose. How long a time and how often did he piously deceive them in this way, leaving them under the impression that if he appeared the first at the community prayers, it was because he had risen more promptly and come to this exercise ! But finally, his disciples discovered the truth ; they perceived that if he was in the oratory every morning, he had passed the night there, or that his prayers had preceded theirs by several hours. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. VIII.

1. Ephes. IV. 24.

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

A. — FUNCTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

I. THE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.

1. The end of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is to give a Christian education to children; and it is for this purpose the Brothers keep schools, in order that, having the children under their care from morning until evening, they may teach them how to lead good lives, by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion, inspiring them with Christian maxims, and thus giving them a suitable education. — *Rules*, Chap. I.

2. This Institute is of very great necessity, because artisans and the poor, being usually little instructed and being occupied all day in gaining their own livelihood and that of their children, cannot themselves give them the necessary instruction and a suitable and Christian education. — *Rules*, Chap. I.

3. Not only does God wish that all men

should arrive at a knowledge of the truth, *but will have all men to be saved.*¹ Now, He cannot truly wish it without offering them the means, and consequently without giving children teachers who will contribute to the execution of this design in their regard.

As St. Paul says, this is the field that God cultivates and the edifice which He raises; and it is you whom He has chosen to be His co-operators in this work, by announcing to your pupils the Gospel of His Son, and the truths therein contained. — *Med.* 193.

4. Admire how God, in His goodness, provides for all the wants of His creatures, and what admirable means He takes to procure for men the knowledge of the truly good, that is, what concerns the good of their souls. Offer yourself to God to second His designs in favour of the children confided to you as much as He will require of you. — *Med.* 197.

5. Offer yourself to God to second his designs in favour of the children entrusted to you, as far as He will require of you. — *Med.* 197.

II. THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER IS THE CO-OPERATOR OF JESUS CHRIST.

Our Lord did not confine Himself to entrusting His Apostles with the teaching of catechism;

He exercised it Himself, teaching the principal truths of our religion, saying to His Apostles : *To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God ; for therefore am I sent.* ¹

Say in like manner that it is for this that Our Lord has sent you, and that the Church, whose ministers you are, employs you. Endeavour therefore to acquit yourself of this holy function with as much esteem, zeal and success as the saints who exercised it. — *Med.* 199.

III. A TEACHER SHOULD BE THE GUARDIAN ANGEL OF HIS PUPILS.

1. You are like St. John, the angels sent by God to prepare the way for Him, that is, the means of coming and entering your hearts and those of your disciples. — *Med.* 2.

2. It is necessary that you should be for them visible angels, who will animate them both by instruction and good example to relish and practise the maxims of the Gospel, so that, by these means, these holy maxims, making a strong impression on their mind and heart, may become the rule of their whole conduct.

Such is the function you are to exercise with regard to your disciples, your ministry making it your duty to do for them what your guardian angels are doing for you, that is,

urging them earnestly to practise the maxims of the Gospel, and giving them means that are easy and in keeping with their age. It is thus that these pupils, having gradually accustomed themselves in childhood to lead a Christian life, may, as they advance in years, acquire a kind of habit of so living, that they will persevere without much trouble until death. — *Med.* 197.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER INSTRUCTS HIS PUPILS HOW TO LIVE IN A CHRISTIAN MANNER.

1. You are charged by your state with the education of children, and your whole care should be to imbue them with the Christian spirit. — *Med.* 198.

2. You have been chosen by Almighty God to announce the maxims of the Gospel to your pupils; hence, you should teach them with the greatest zeal, and provide them with all the necessary means to live up to them. — *Med.* 198. .

3 Have a special esteem for the Christian instruction and education of your pupils, because it is a powerful means of making them become real children of God and citizens of heaven; and because this Christian education is not only the formation and support of their piety, but also the source of all the other good done in the Church. — *Med.* 100.

4. Your whole care should be to apply yourself to things purely spiritual, and such as relate to the Christian education of your children. — *Med.* 58.

5. Is it therefore your principal care to instruct your disciples in the maxims of the holy Gospel and the practices of a Christian life? Have you nothing more at heart than to make them love them? Do you look on the good you are able to do them as the foundation of all the virtues that they will practise in the course of their lives? Because the habits of virtue cultivated in youth, meeting with less obstacles in corrupt nature, strike deepest root in the hearts of those in whom they have been formed in early years. — *Med.* 194.

6. In order to be saved, it is not enough to be instructed in the Christian truths which are purely speculative, since *faith without works is dead*,¹ that is, like a body without a soul, and consequently, not sufficient to work out our salvation.

It is therefore not enough to teach children the science of Christianity, and the mysteries and speculative truths of our religion; we must also teach them how to practise the maxims of the Gospel. But, as their minds are not yet sufficiently enlightened to understand them thoroughly and practise them exactly, you should be to them like visible guardian

1. James. II. 26.

angels for these ends : 1. To explain these maxims familiarly, such as they are contained in the holy Gospel ; 2. To direct their steps in the way which will lead them to the practice of these maxims. — *Med.* 197.

7. It is very important that you teach your children how to pray, as Our Lord taught those who followed Him, and to pray with much piety and by themselves, and keeping away all thoughts that might distract their minds during that time, so that, being occupied only with God, they may easily obtain what they ask for. As the majority are poor, it is necessary to teach them to despise riches and to love poverty, and for this purpose, remind them that Our Lord was born poor, that He was pleased to live and converse with the poor, and that He even uttered these words : *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*¹ — *Med.* 202.

V. THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER SHOULD INSPIRE CHILDREN WITH HORROR FOR SIN AND TO AVOID BAD COMPANY.

1. The object of the Son of God in coming into this world having been the destruction of sin, this should also be the principal end of the institution of the Christian Schools.

Your zeal should especially lead you not to suffer anything in the children that might displease God. If you remark anything in them that offends God, you should immediately do what you can to remedy it ; and in such cases, in imitation of the prophet Elias, you must show your zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of your disciples : *With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant.*¹
— *Med.* 202.

2. Often exhort the children to flee from sin with as much promptitude as they would from the presence of a serpent.

3. Induce those whom you instruct to look upon sin as a hideous disease which infects souls, renders them unworthy of approaching or appearing before God ; inspire them with love for virtue ; impress them with sentiments of piety, and act in such a manner that God may not cease to reign in them, and that thus they may be free from sin, or at least, avoid grievous sins which are the death of the soul.
— *Med.* 67.

4. Do you make every effort to win to God those who are confided to you and whom you see inclined to go astray ? Do you leave nothing undone to destroy in them the vices to which they are inclined ? Do you yourself

1. III Kings. XIX. 10.

pray that they may change conduct? As you are charged with their souls, you should do everything possible to put them on the road to heaven. — *Med.* 122.

VI. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TEACHES SCHOOL AT GRENOBLE.

The Brother who was in charge of the parochial school of Saint Laurent, having in obedience to his orders undertaken a long journey in the interests of the community, St. John Baptist De La Salle took his place, and applied himself to instruct the children with such meekness, patience, attention and tranquillity, that all the Brothers should take for model in this function.

If he discriminated among the pupils, it was in favour of the poorest. His inclination for them was noticed by the pains he took to make them advance in reading and writing, because, as he said, this was very necessary for them : it is thus that his humility concealed his charity. His zeal in their regard was also shown in catechism which he taught them daily : and if, among them any were preferred, it was the most ignorant. As the latter are usually abandoned to their natural dullness or frivolity of mind by teachers who have but little zeal and charity, they became the object of his predilection and the exercise of his patience.

B. — THE TWELVE VIRTUES OF A GOOD MASTER

I. GRAVITY.

1. It is the virtue of gravity which St. Paul recommended in the most cogent manner to his disciple Titus as a minister of the Gospel,

and which he believed more necessary for him than many other excellent qualities. After zeal for instruction and purity of morals, grave modesty is the most useful virtue for those who are charged with the instruction of youth. — *Med.* 206.

2. The Brothers shall very carefully watch over themselves so as not to do anything in school but what is proper and becoming, and especially not to let anything appear savouring of levity or passion. — *Rules*, Chap. IX.

II. SILENCE.

1. Silence being one of the principal means of establishing and maintaining order in school, the Brothers shall look upon its exact observance as one of their principal Rules ; and to bring themselves to this exactness, they should above all frequently call to mind, that it would be of little use to try to have their pupils observe it, if they themselves were not very faithful thereto. For this purpose, they shall be very attentive always to employ the signs in use in the schools. — *Rules*, Chap. IX.

2. The Brothers shall watch in a special manner over themselves so as to speak but very seldom in school, and only when absolutely necessary, and when they cannot express themselves by signs. — *Rules*, Chap. IX.

III. HUMILITY.

If you wish easily to convert and win your disciples over to God, be children like themselves not in *sense* but in *malice*,¹ as St. Paul says. The more you become little in your own eyes, the more will you love to be regarded as such, the more will you love the persecutions and humiliations to which you may be subjected, and the more also will you touch the hearts of those whom you instruct and induce them to lead truly Christian lives. — *Med.* 79.

IV. PRUDENCE.

One of the principal cares of those who instruct others should be to know their pupils, and to understand how to behave towards them, because some require to be conducted with more meekness, others with more firmness; some require more patience, others to be urged and stimulated; some need to be reprimanded and punished to correct them of their faults; there are some who need to be continually watched over to keep them from going astray or ruin. You should often and earnestly ask this discernment of God as one of the qualities most necessary for the management of those who are entrusted to you. — *Med.* 33.

1. I Cor. XIV. 20.

V. WISDOM.

1. Those who are entrusted with the management of children, should conduct themselves with so much discretion in their regard, that nothing in their words or actions may cause them a dislike for the service of God, or withdraw them ever so little from their duties. Is this one of your first solitudes? The progress of your pupils in piety, and the fruit that you yourself may reap in instructing them, depends very much on your own wise conduct. — *Med.* 115.

2. Does the wisdom which your pupils remark in you make such an impression on them that it alone is sufficient to make them wise? This is the good effect that should be produced in those entrusted to you by your position as a teacher. — *Med.* 128.

3. Your conduct should be so wise, both in relation to yourself and to those whom you instruct, that they may hold it in veneration, seeing that it is so much above what is merely human, and exempt from the passions, which take away, or at least diminish, the respect due to those who are charged with the guidance of others. — *Med.* 178.

VI. PATIENCE.

1. Be careful not to give way to impatience in school, for it is not the means of establishing order or silence. — *Letters.*

2. Patience and control of temper are also most important points to which you must be very attentive, especially where the children confided to you misbehave and you are obliged to reprimand or correct them. There is nothing that requires your attention more than to master your passions, so that they may never get the better of your good resolutions. — *Med.* 206.

3. When you are inclined to be impatient in school, refrain for some time from acting or speaking until this movement has subsided. — *Letters.*

4. You cannot better instruct your pupils than by edifying them and subduing all anger and impatience. — *Med.* 155.

VII. RESERVE.

1. Are you reserved and modest, not only in the presence of your Brothers, but also in that of your disciples, and do you always give them good example ? — *Med.* 128.

2. Be careful not to speak too freely to your pupils ; this would make them lose all respect for you. — *Letters.*

3. Be careful to observe modesty and reserve which will help you to edify your neighbour and inspire those with piety whose education is confided to you. — *Med.* 127.

4. You should be so recollected, modest and reserved, that it may really appear that God is with you, and that you have only Him in view in your conduct. — *Med.* 60.

VIII. MEEKNESS.

1. Consider as the first of your obligations that of endeavouring to win the hearts of your pupils ; for this is one of the means of inducing them to live a Christian life. Often reflect that in default of employing this means, you will estrange them from God instead of leading them to Him. — *Med.* 115.

2. It is not by scolding, fault-finding or murmuring that we show affection and union : it is by speaking to one another in a charitable and affable manner, that is, by humbling ourselves beneath our Brothers ; for, as the Wise Man says : *A mild answer breaketh wrath : but a harsh word stirreth up fury.*¹ Hence, Our Lord, in His sermon on the mount, said to His Apostles : *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land ;*² that is, the whole world, for, those possess the whole world, who possess the hearts of all men. It is for this reason that persons of a meek and considerate character easily succeed : they insinuate themselves in such a way into the hearts of

1. Prov. XV. 1.

2. Matt. V. 4.

those with whom they converse and with whom they have relations, that they insensibly win them over and obtain from them all that they wish ; it is thus that hearts are captured and made to do everything we wish ; it is thus that those born with this happy disposition, or who have acquired it with the help of grace, become, so to speak, the masters of others, and direct them to duty as they please. — *Med.* 65.

3. Do you, by your meekness and wisdom, induce those who are confided to you to give up vice and take to piety ? These two means joined to prayer are often more efficacious with souls than any other that can be imagined. — *Med.* 114.

4. Considerateness is one of the best means to win and touch the hearts of those who have fallen into any fault, and to dispose them, by expiation, to be converted... Be considerate with those whom you have to instruct, when they have fallen into any fault, and when you are obliged to correct them.

Pray that you may never allow yourself to yield to your angry passions when there is question of punishing your pupils. — *Med.* 204.

IX. ZEAL.

1. Your only object in teaching your pupils should be the love and glory of God. — *Med.* 201.

2. Apply yourself to the duties of your employment with all the affection of your heart, and as working solely for the glory of God. — *Med.* 201.

3. Your zeal for the advancement of your pupils in the spirit of Christianity and for their salvation should be so pure and so well regulated, that you may be able to say to them: *For Christ therefore are we ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us.*¹ — *Med.* 201.

4. Appreciate the honour done you in being employed in education, and look upon the children whom God has confided to you as the children of God Himself. Be much more careful of their education and instruction than you would be, if they were the children of a king. — *Med.* 133.

X. VIGILANCE.

1. As the children are as weak in will as they are in body, and as they are deficient in light as to what is good, they are much exposed to sin in the occasions they meet with. In order to maintain themselves in the way of salvation, they need light, and vigilant guides, who are intelligent enough in matters of piety, and have sufficient knowledge of the ordinary faults of youth to call attention and preserve the children from them.

1. II Cor. V. 20.

It is this that God has provided for, in giving children teachers whom He has charged with watching over them with sufficient care and vigilance, so as to suffer nothing that might be dangerous to their salvation to take possession of their hearts. Thus, the children, although placed in the midst of all the dangers met with in the world, but in charge of attentive guides, and under the protection of God, will preserve their innocence, the devil seeing all his efforts laid bare and powerless. — *Med.* 197.

2. Ask of God the grace of watching in such a manner over the children who are confided to you, that you may take all possible precautions to guarantee them against mortal falls. Strive to be such good guides in their regard, that the light you shall have procured for yourself from God by prayer and by your fidelity in acquitting yourself of the duties of your employment, may make you see all that may be an obstacle to the good of their souls in such a manner, that you will keep away from them whatever might be pernicious or turn them from the road to heaven.

This should be your chief solicitude for them, and it is the principal reason for which God has charged you with so holy a ministry ; it is also this of which God will require a very strict account from you on the day of judgment. — *Med.* 197.

3. You are in an employment in which you

should give your most vigilant care to oppose the exterior and interior enemies that are hurtful to the progress of your pupils in piety and who are chiefly their bad companions, and their evil inclinations. You should therefore not omit anything to prevent them from corrupting one another. Is this what you endeavour to do? Often think that God has given you this care for the good of their souls. — *Med.* 114.

4. You are the shepherds^{*} of the fold with which God has charged you, and consequently obliged to watch over those who compose it, because as St. Paul says, you are to give an account of their souls.¹ — *Med.* 186.

5. It is necessary that your first care, and the first effect of your vigilance in your employment be to prevent your pupils from doing anything wrong or in the least unbecoming, so that they may refrain from everything having the least appearance of sin. — *Med.* 194.

6. Be very vigilant over the children, because there is order in school only inasmuch as the pupils are watched over, and this is also the reason why they advance. It is not impatience that will correct them, but your patience and good conduct. Be careful, I entreat you, that they be very modest and pious in church and at their prayers; this is

1. Heb. XIII. 17.

one of the first things you should impress on them. — *Letters*.

XI. PIETY.

1. A master who has piety at heart will bring forth wisdom, says the Wise Man ; that is he will acquire wisdom himself, and at the same time render those wise whom he instructs. — *Med.* 91.

2. You should be so replenished with the spirit of piety by your frequent meditations and recollection, and exert yourself in such a manner to imbue your pupils with it, that all who see them may admire their respect and modesty in church. — *Med.* 136.

3. You should inspire these children with piety, make them love prayer, attending church and exercises of devotion. If therefore they are disrespectful in church, without reserve, not praying or praying without devotion, it will be seen by their exterior, that you yourself are lacking in piety, and that, not bringing forth good fruits, you cannot make others hear them. — *Med.* 60.

XII. GENEROSITY.

1. It is necessary to uphold the interests of God with a truly Christian firmness and generosity ; and this is what you are obliged to do in your employment. You exercise one of the

principal functions of the Apostles, by bringing up new believers in the faith, that is, children, but recently filled with the spirit of God in Baptism. Render yourself worthy of so holy a ministry, after the example of the Apostles, by retreat and application to meditation. — *Med.* 102.

2. You have bound yourself to God in place of those whom you instruct; and in undertaking the care of their souls, you have offered Him, so to speak, soul for soul. Have you sometimes thought of the engagement you contracted in taking charge of those whom God has confided to you; and, in order to correspond with it, are you as solicitous for their salvation as you are for your own? You should not only give it all your care, but consecrate thereto your whole life, and devote yourself entirely to obtaining it for them. — *Med.* 137.

3. The more virtue and perfection your state requires, the more need have you also of strength and generosity to soar higher, and not to allow yourself to be disheartened by the apprehension of the pains you meet with. — *Med.* 49.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AN ADMIRABLE
EDUCATOR OF YOUTH.

The great talent that St. John Baptist De La Salle had for bringing up youth in a Christian manner won him the confidence of their families. Parents

who were unable to manage their wayward children and despaired of being able to bring them to duty, sought in him the grace they did not find in themselves to bring them back from their wanderings. He often succeeded beyond their expectations : the wayward and incorrigible were returned to them gentle, submissive and pious. — *Life*, by Blain, Book III, Chap. IV.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE VISITS THE SCHOOLS.

St. John Baptist regularly visited the schools, both to see whether the children profited by the instructions given them, and in what manner the Brothers conducted themselves in their regard, to encourage them in the exercise of their ministry, or to call attention to defects he had remarked. The order and good conduct which he wished them to observe made him draw up a kind of rule in which he explained in a solid as well as an attractive and edifying manner, all that is to be done in class, and the Brothers have always taken delight in following his prescriptions with scrupulous exactitude. He does not wish them to attach themselves in such a manner to the accessory as to neglect the principal things : hence it is seen in this rule, that after having dwelt at great length on the order that is to be observed in teaching reading, writing and the other necessary branches, he insists particularly on the method to be followed in teaching children religion and how to live as good Christians.

The pious precautions that the holy priest took so that children might be taught piety were not useless, for he had the consolation of seeing them make rapid progress in the instructions given them, and this was a great subject of edification to everybody. — *Life*, by Blain, Book III, Chap. IV.

C. — MODELS OF A CHRISTIAN TEACHER

I. JESUS CHRIST.

1. Consider Our Lord in the Good Shepherd of the Gospel, who seeks the lost sheep, places it on His shoulders and brings it back to the fold ; and, as you hold His place, consider yourself obliged to do the same thing ; consequently, ask of Him the necessary graces to bring about the conversion of the hearts of your disciples. — *Med.* 196.

2. In order to discharge the duties of your ministry properly, it would not suffice to conform exteriorly to Our Lord in His conduct for the conversion of souls, if you were not also to enter into His views and intentions. He came into the world, as He Himself says, *that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.*¹ And again : *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life,*² that is, they procure eternal life, which is that of the soul, for those who willingly hear them and who, after listening to them with attention, practise them with love. — *Med.* 196.

3. Endeavour in your employment to have intentions as pure and as disinterested as those

1. John. X. 10.

2. John. VI. 64.

of Our Lord Himself; thus will you draw down His graces and blessings on your labours. — *Med.* 196.

II. THE APOSTLES.

1. It is related in the Acts of the Apostles that *they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus*;¹ the fruit of which was that *the Lord increased daily together such as should be saved*.² If the Apostles acted thus, it was because Jesus had given them the example, for it is said that *He was teaching daily in the temple*,³ where all the people flocked to hear Him, *but at night going out, He abode in the mount that is called Olivet*.⁴ — *Med.* 200.

2. You therefore, who have succeeded the Apostles in their office of teaching Catechism and instructing the poor, if you wish to render your ministry as useful as possible to the Church, must teach catechism daily in order to acquaint them with the fundamental truths of our holy religion, thus following the example of the Apostles and Our Lord Himself, since He daily devoted Himself to this function. — *Med.* 200.

1. Acts. V. 42.

2. Acts. II. 47.

3. Luke. XIX. 47.

4. Luke. XXI. 37.

III. ST. JOSEPH.

You exercise a holy employment, which, having much relation with that of St. Joseph, also requires that your piety and virtue be not ordinary. Therefore take this saint for your model, as he is your patron, and following his example, try to excel in virtue, in order to render yourself worthy of your ministry. — *Med.* 110.

IV. THE SAINTS.

What will help you to understand how important the function of teaching the elements of religion is, is to remember that the holy Bishops of the primitive Church considered it as their principal duty, looking upon it as an honour to teach the catechumens and new Christians by familiar instructions. — *Med.* 199.

D. — THE ACCOUNT THAT A TEACHER WILL HAVE
TO RENDER TO GOD.

ON THE MANNER HE SHALL HAVE EXERCISED
HIS EMPLOYMENT.

1. *You are God's husbandry*,¹ says St. Paul, and the souls of the children whom you instruct are the field he has given you to cultivate, since it is He who has committed to you

1. I Cor. III. 9.

the ministry you exercise. When therefore, you appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, each shall himself render an account to God of what he shall have done as His minister, being with regard to children, *the dispensers of the mysteries of Christ*,¹ who being then your judge, shall say to you, as the rich man in the Gospel said to his steward : *Give an account of thy stewardship*.² Then the eyes of the Sovereign Judge shall penetrate your heart and He shall examine whether you have been faithful stewards of the goods confided to you, and of the talents given you to employ in His service. Then will be seen clearly the good or bad use you have made of them, because Our Lord says : *For nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid, that shall not be known*.³ — *Med.* 205.

2. If you wish to prevent the account that you shall have to render Him from growing greater every instant, render it every day to yourself, examining before God how to act in your employment, and whether you fail therein in any respect. Unfold your real condition to yourself, and sincerely condemning all your failings, expiate them without mercy, so that, when Jesus Christ comes to judge you, you may stand His judgment without too much fear, as He will find nothing more to

1. I Cor. IV. 1.

2. Luke, XVI. 2.

3. Matt. X. 26.

condemn in you for which you have not already punished yourselves, and thus anticipated His judgment. — *Med.* 205.

3. Have you until now considered the salvation of your pupils as your own affair during the whole time they have been under your care? You have, indeed, exercises that are established for your own sanctification; but, if you are animated with an ardent zeal for the salvation of those whom you are obliged to instruct, you will not fail when making these exercises, to do so for this intention. In acting thus, you will draw down on yourself the graces necessary to contribute to the salvation of your pupils, and God Himself will take charge of yours: therefore let these be your dispositions hereafter. — *Med.* 205.

4. Be vigilant that your pupils may not be corrupted either by bad companions or by the malignity of those who would engage them in error, but that they may *in all things grow up in him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity.*¹ — *Med.* 205.

5. Prepare yourself to answer Our Lord when He shall interrogate you, that you have

1. Ephes. IV. 16.

acquitted yourself well of all these duties, and rest assured that the best way to justify this answer and that Our Lord may be pleased and pronounce a favourable sentence on you will be, to be able to present to Him all the children whom you have instructed as a part of the Church, having entered it by your care and thus become *the temple of God and the abode of the Holy Ghost*.² It is thus that you will show Our Lord that you have truly discharged the duties of your ministry by labouring wisely and without ceasing in building up and sustaining the Church, for which office He called you. — *Med.* 205.

6. Have you well reflected on what it is to render an account to God of the salvation of a soul which has been lost because you did not induce and help it to do well? — *Med.* 207.

E. — THE REWARD OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER.

I. THE REWARD THAT GOD BESTOWS IN THIS WORLD ON THOSE WHO LABOUR FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

1. God is so good, that He does not allow anything we do for Him to go unrewarded, and especially the services we render Him by labouring for the salvation of souls. If it is true that God so liberally rewards those who have

1. I Cor. III. 16.

left all for Him, that they receive a hundred-fold even in this world, for how much greater reason will He reward, even at the present time, those who zealously labour for the extension of His kingdom !

God gives those who occupy themselves indefatigably with the salvation of souls two sorts of reward in this world : first, an abundance of graces for themselves ; in the second place, a more extensive ministry and great facility in bringing about the conversion of souls. — *Med.* 207.

2. Another reward which those receive even in this world who labour for the salvation of souls, is the consolation they often have of seeing God well served by a number of those whom they have instructed ; herein they have a proof that their work has not been in vain, but that it has resulted in saving those with whose instruction they were charged.

It is thus that St. Paul, after having preached the Gospel to the Corinthians and converted them, could write : *Are not you my work in the Lord ?* ¹ — *Med.* 207.

3. You should also consider it a great reward to have the consolation of seeing the children entrusted to you conducting themselves well, knowing their religion and living a pious life.

Thank God from your whole heart for all

these rewards given you in advance in this life, as a pledge of those reserved until after your death. — *Med.* 207.

4. You may also expect another reward which God will give in this world. If you have endeavoured to fulfil your duties faithfully, and if, through your zeal and the grace of your state, you have strengthened your pupils in the spirit of Christianity, you will have a special consolation, when, having grown up and obliged to direct themselves, you see them *live in justice and piety*, avoiding bad company and practising good works. They will thus conduct themselves, because the instructions which you shall have given them will not only have consisted in words, but also have been accompanied with abundant graces by which they shall have profited, and which will afterwards sustain them in the practice of virtue. — *Med.* 207.

5. The perseverance of your pupils in piety cannot fail to be for you a great subject of consolation, when you reflect that their edifying conduct is the fruit of their faith and your instructions, and that in consequence God loves them and thus gives you grounds for hoping that they will be saved. What joy to recall that they received Christian instruction in your catechisms *not as the word of men but (as it is indeed) the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed,*¹ as is evi-

1. I Thess. II. 13.

dent by the pious life they continue to lead ! Hence you may say, in the consolation you experience in seeing their perseverance, that they are your hope, your *joy* and your *crown*¹ in Our Lord Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 207.

6. Look upon it as one of the greatest rewards that God gives you even in this world to see that, by means of the establishment of the Christian schools, and especially by that entrusted to you, religion and piety have increased among the faithful, especially among artisans and the poor ; and thank God every day, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, for having brought about these happy results and given such precious help to the Church. — *Med.* 207.

II. THE REWARD THAT GOD RESERVES IN HEAVEN FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.

1. Consider that your reward will be so much greater in heaven as you shall have done more to produce fruit in the souls of those who are confided to your care. It is in these sentiments that St. Paul said to the Corinthians : *You are our glory in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*² You can say the same things of your disciples, that is, that on the day of judgment, they will be your glory if you have taught them well and if they have prof-

1. Philip. IV. 1.

2. II Cor. I. 14.

ited by your instructions, and the benefit that your pupils will have derived from them shall be manifested before the whole world. And thus you shall receive glory not only on that day but also during eternity, for having instructed the children well, because the glory that you shall have procured for them will redound to you. — *Med.* 208.

2. Ah! what transports of joy will you not experience when you shall hear those whom you have led to heaven as if by the hand, say to you on the day of judgment, and in heaven during eternity, what a certain girl possessed by the devil of whom she was afterwards delivered by St. Paul, said of him and those who accompanied him : *These men are the servants of the most high God, who preach unto you the way of salvation.*¹ Thus likewise will these elect recall the good you have done them : some will present to Our Lord their robe of innocence that you have helped them to preserve in all its whiteness ; others who, after their sin, shall have cleansed theirs through your care in the blood of the Lamb, will represent to Him the pains you have given yourself to bring them back to the path of salvation ; all will unite their voices to obtain a favourable judgment for you from Our Lord, beseeching Him not to delay placing you in possession of a happiness which, by your

1. Acts. XVI. 17.

labour and care, you have helped them to merit. Oh ! what glory will it not be for those who shall have instructed youth, when their zeal and application to procure the salvation of children shall be published before all mankind, and heaven resound with acts of thanksgiving which these blessed children will render to those who shall have taught them the road to heaven !

Act therefore in such a manner by your good and pious conduct with regard to those who are confided to you, as to procure for yourself all these advantages, and the possession of unspeakable glory. — *Med.* 208.

III. THE VOCATION OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER.

After showing them by example, he had recourse to argument to prove to his disciples the excellence, the importance and the advantages of their profession. Nothing can be said on so noble a matter that he did not touch upon in his meditations on the subject. He animated them to perseverance in their employment by the graces attached thereto and the consolations that follow the sacrifice of self-love and of nature. Finally, he spared no pains to enhance in the estimation of his disciples, the glory and dignity of a vocation consecrated to teaching the Gospel to the poor and the little ones, making them understand that it is by this function that Our Lord characterized His mission. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XV.





XXXVI

MODESTY

I. NECESSITY OF MODESTY.

1. The first thing to which we should pay particular attention is to observe great modesty ; St. Paul recommends it to the faithful above all things : *Let yet your modesty be known to all men ;*¹ as if he had said : Be modest not only when alone, as indeed you should be, because the Lord is nigh, but be so before all men. Thus, when you are out of the house, conduct yourself in such a manner that all men may know your modesty and be edified. This is so much the more necessary because, labouring for the salvation of others, you should begin by giving them good example in order to win them over to God. — *Med.* 92.

2. We must practise modesty, reserve and exterior moderation : because our intellect and imagination are thus freed from all that is earthly, human and sensible ; because these three things prevent many sins ; because they

remove all external things which may be an obstacle to the interior life. — *Collection.*

3. Dissipation and curiosity are great evils in the service of God. Your eyes are your two greatest enemies ; this is why you should continually watch over them so as not to allow them to see anything but what is necessary. The greatest good you can acquire is recollection ; and when you have acquired it, you may say what Solomon said of wisdom : *All good things came to me together with her.*¹ — *Letters.*

4. Curiosity is one of the greatest obstacles to piety ; be careful, therefore, and apply yourself above all things to recollection and the presence of God, for this is the best means you can take to become interior ; for the love of God, labour for this end. You see the harm that dissipation causes you ; therefore, govern your eyes and your tongue. There is nothing so important for you as this practice, because God does not only require the exterior of our actions, but wishes also that they be performed with interior dispositions. It will bring about the presence of God in your exercises and induce you to perform them well, interiorly as well as exteriorly. — *Letters.*

5. Are you reserved and modest not only before your Brothers, but also before your

pupils, and do you constantly give them good example ? Does your example make such an impression on them that it alone is capable of making them conduct themselves well ? This is the good effect that your office as teacher should produce on them. There is no one to whom you cannot and should not be useful by your virtuous example ; it is the first way in which you are obliged to preach to everyone, and the principal apostolic function that you have to discharge. — *Med.* 128.

6. Everything in you should breathe the sanctity to which your profession obliges you. — *Med.* 60.

7. If your exterior behaviour is simple and grave, those with whom you are in contact will soon be convinced that your interior is well regulated, and that you are fit to bring up your pupils in the spirit of Christianity. — *Med.* 69.

8. Your exterior should be holy, because it should be edifying ; you should be so recollected, so modest and reserved, that it may be evident that God is really in you, and that you have only Him in view in your conduct. — *Med.* 60.

9. Endeavour very earnestly to lay aside worldly manners, and to adopt a simple air and manners and conduct that breathe the spirit of God. — *Letters.*

II. MODESTY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

Before committing the Rules of modesty to writing, St. John Baptist had, for a long time, assured their authority by their practice, and still more by his lessons and example. He observed them all and to the letter.

With regard to modesty in his dress, he always made neatness and cleanliness harmonize with the greatest poverty.

In order to walk according to the rules that the saints have laid down, he was never seen running nor walking too fast without a legitimate reason ; neither did he walk too slowly, dragging his feet or raising them in a negligent manner, producing a heavy slovenly step. In walking, he avoided abrupt movements of the head, the arms, the hands or body, and these defects, against which he was so much on his guard himself, he could not suffer in his disciples. But on the other hand, there was nothing affected, too studied or excessively grave in his walk, which bespoke the gravity of his state.

With regard to his countenance and carriage, he always wore a pleasant, open, serene and peacable air, without affectation, without constraint, with an expression of goodness, meekness and piety calculated to lead to God and win hearts.

The tone of his voice was sweet, neither too loud nor too low. He was never seen in anger, excited or sad, but he rarely laughed. The heavenly joy that lit up his countenance made him appear as if raised above human nature. He had but Jesus on his lips, and peace and mercy in his heart. The virtue of Our Lord manifested itself in him, and the serenity of his countenance with its tranquillity opened to him the hearts of his disciples.

I am prepared to assert that no man of our time had more the appearance of a saint ; he appeared such to all that saw him, and thus inspired those who did

see him to become such also. In approaching him, one was filled with respect and confusion because one felt himself to be a sinner, or tepid, or unfaithful in his presence.

Among all the practices of modesty, that which the servant of God had most at heart and which he considered the most important, was custody of the eyes; hence there was no practice that he endeavoured more strenuously to make the Brothers adopt than custody of the eyes; being convinced that it shuts out bad and useless thoughts and temptations. — *Life and Virtues*, Chap. XI.





XXXVII

THE WORLD

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF RELIGIOUS BY THEIR SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

1. How happy you are for having left the world! You should look on this grace as one of the greatest of your whole life, and daily thank God for it. In order to live up to the spirit of your vocation, despise the world; and looking upon it as the enemy of Jesus Christ, always be opposed to its maxims. Refrain from frequenting it, and do not communicate with worldlings any more than necessity requires; this is the way to be preserved from all its snares and dangers, and to preserve the spirit of your vocation.

In communicating with the world, we take up its spirit, and as it is opposed to the spirit of Jesus Christ, and as the two cannot exist together in the soul, we naturally lose the latter by taking up the former. Earnestly ask of God to give you greater and greater dislike for a corrupted world, and attachment to the holy doctrine and maxims of Our Lord. — *Med.* 182.

2. You who have renounced the world, have you done so in such a manner as not to think

of it any more at all? Are you entirely disgusted with everything that constitutes the pleasure of people living in the world, and are you no longer attached to anything? — *Med.* 144.

3. It is not reputation that we should look for or desire in this world; it is the plenitude of the spirit of God in order to live holily in our state and to discharge our duties faithfully. Rest assured that it will be only by flight from the world and by prayer that you will possess this plenitude of the spirit of God; hence you should love retirement, and apply yourself very fervently to meditation. — *Med.* 171.

4. When you are assailed with thoughts of the world, disgust for your state and spiritual exercises, implore the assistance of St. Michael, to help you to understand well that the God whom we serve is above everything, and that only He merits our affection. Let us also pray to this saint to inspire us with aversion for the world that would usurp the place of God in our hearts; and to remove from our mind all ideas of the world by these thundering words which he pronounced in the combat with Lucifer: *Who is like unto God?* — *Med.* 125.

II. DANGERS FOR RELIGIOUS WHO FREQUENT THE WORLD AND TAKE UP ITS SPIRIT.

1. You should do everything possible to prevent your disciples from adopting the

maxims and principles of the world and to inspire them with dislike of them. The more aversion you have for the world, the more will you hate its conduct and maxims in yourself and in others. — *Med.* 44.

2. The motives of being preserved from sin and attaining the holiness which God requires of you, should engage you to live in estrangement from the world, and to be orderly and edifying in your conduct. — *Med.* 138.

3. You should consider yourself as dead to the world, and have no communication with it. If you really belong to God, you are the enemy of the world, and it is yours, because it is the enemy of God. Treat it therefore as such : dread to converse with it, and do not allow it the least access to you, lest, communicating with it, you may participate in its spirit. — *Med.* 41.

4. What usually causes the loss of religious, is the relations they have with the world, because they are thus withdrawn from the communications which they should have with God. God and the world, the spirit of God and the spirit of the world cannot, as Our Lord tells us in the Gospel, exist together ; hence when we have the one, we cannot have the other. Be on your guard, therefore, and do not again attach yourself to what you have left. — *Med.* 174.

5. As the world is blinded by sin, it has

maxims altogether contrary to those which the spirit of God teaches holy souls, and it is by these maxims it is guided; it is the same worldly maxims that are the source of sin and of the corruption of the heart. — *Med.* 44.

6. Examine yourself whether in laying aside your worldly dress, you have also divested yourself of all its false maxims, whether in putting on a new habit, you have renewed yourself in spirit, and whether you have entirely renounced the practices of worldlings, as your life, as well as your habit, should be different from theirs. — *Med.* 60.

7. If you wish to persevere and die in your vocation, never have any intercourse with the people of the world; for little by little you will acquire a taste for their habits and be drawn into conversation with them to such an extent, that you will no longer, through policy, refrain from applauding their language, however pernicious it may be; this will lead you into unfaithfulness; and being no longer faithful in observing your Rules, you will grow disgusted with your vocation, and finally abandon it. — *Last recommendations of St. J. B. De La Salle.*

III. HOW TO CONDUCT OURSELVES IN OUR NECESSARY RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD.

1. The functions you exercise oblige you to a certain extent to mingle with the world every day, where even your least actions are observed;

this should engage you not to neglect anything to be models of all virtues in the eyes of seculars in the midst of whom you are obliged to live. It is especially by your gravity and modesty that you must edify them, because if they should observe in you any trait of levity or dissipation, they would easily be scandalized ; whereas, if you appear before them with a recollected exterior, they will have much veneration for you. — *Med.* 69.

2. You are obliged in your employment to have some relations with the world ; take care not to adopt its spirit, but to be so modest and reserved as not to receive any harm from it ; moreover, edify your neighbour, and inspire those with piety whose education has been entrusted to you. — *Med.* 127.

3. Are you reserved and modest not only before your Brothers, but also before your disciples, and do you constantly give them good example ? Does the virtue that your disciples remark in you make such an impression on them that it alone is capable of assuring their good conduct ? This is the good effect that should be produced on them by the fact that you are their teacher. There is no one to whom you cannot and should not endeavour to be useful by the example of your virtues ; this is the first way in which you are obliged to preach to everybody, and the principal apostolic function you should exercise. — *Med.* 128.

IV. THE WORLD AND ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

The saints of all ages, like their divine Master, were an object of contempt for the world. The world itself makes saints against its own intention, because in crying down their virtue, it purifies, strengthens and perfects it, and renders it worthy of God.

St. John Baptist De La Salle was censured for everything. They found fault with his dress, his hat, his collar and a thousand other trifles. He knew how to take advantage of everything said of him, so true it is, *that to them that love God, all things work together unto good.*¹ From this time he made a more declared profession of contempt for the world.

After having resigned the office of Superior, the holy Founder pleasantly answered those who requested him to resume some of the duties of which he had been relieved: "He who is nothing, has nothing to say and should not mix up in anything. It seems to me that retirement, self-humiliation, forgetfulness of the world, on its part and my own, and prayer is what suits me best and what I should hold to." — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XI.

1. Rom. VIII. 28.





XXXVIII

OBEDIENCE

I. THE EXCELLENCE AND NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE.

1. Obedience is the first virtue of a community, and what distinguishes it essentially from secular houses. — *Med.* 92.

2. No virtue is so necessary for you as obedience, since it is essential to your state, and since it alone can sustain you therein; all others without this would be superficial. In religion, obedience alone gives to other virtues their special character. — *Collection.*

3. What constitutes the merit of those who live in community is not the kind of actions which are there performed, but the excellence of the obedience with which they are performed. — *Med.* 11.

4. You will draw down on yourself the graces of Our Lord only by obedience and by submitting to everything for the love of God. — *Letters.*

5. The designs of divine Providence in your regard will infallibly be made known to you by holy obedience, in which you will certainly

find your sanctification, interior peace and salvation. — *Med.* 83.

6. Since we cannot be saved without the grace of our state, and since that of a person living in community is obedience, we should do our utmost to acquire it as perfectly as possible. It is true that being engaged in an exterior employment, you also have other virtues to practise in order to satisfy your obligations ; but rest assured that you will never acquit yourself altogether well of your duty, but inasmuch as you perfectly practise obedience. Hence, you should apply to yourself the words of St. Gregory, Pope, when he says, in his dialogues, that the first and principal virtue of which you should make profession is obedience, because it will be in you the source of all others and of your sanctification. — *Med.* 7.

II. THE FRUITS OF OBEDIENCE.

1. We may attribute to obedience what Solomon said of wisdom, that *all good things come to us together with her.*¹ Indeed, he who obeys through the spirit of religion possesses in himself all virtues. — *Med.* 12.

2. The principal fruit that obedience produces in religious is to lead them to the

1. Wisdom. VII. 2.

perfection of their state, to strengthen them and to make them persevere in it. — *Med.* 12.

3. Voluntary and interior submission will render you truly free with the noble and glorious liberty of the children of God. — *Med.* 83.

4. Nothing renders a religious more solid and firm in his vocation than this obedience, because of the respect and love it gives him for all religious observances, which are the sure way to possess the plenitude of the spirit of his state and to persevere in it. — *Med.* 12.

5. Obedience draws down the blessing of God on what we do in such a manner that by its means we obtain all that we desire, and acquire great facility in doing good and touching hearts when we have the advantage of labouring for the salvation of souls, and doing so only through obedience. — *Med.* 57.

6. We should esteem ourselves happy to be in a state which binds us to obedience, and it must be regarded as the mother and support of the other virtues. But if we wish it to be thus, it is necessary to practise obedience with all possible perfection, because God grants this grace only to those who no longer have any will of their own, and who regard His as the rule and principle of their whole conduct. — *Med.* 12.

7. As long as the spirit of submission is in a community, God will bless it. — *Letters.*

8. The less your submission, the less affection you will have for your state. — *Letters.*

III. OBEDIENCE SHOULD BE RELIGIOUS.

1. Let faith always accompany and be the principle and end of your obedience; otherwise it will not be Christian and religious as required by your state. — *Collection.*

2. It is God whom you should obey in the person of your Superior and Director, because to God alone is due, and He alone deserves the submission of creatures. Hence in the practice of this virtue, no other view than that which regards God should ever make any impression on you, or induce you to obey. — *Collection.*

3. Those who obey their superior with the view that it is God whom they obey, so much enhance their obedience by this motive of faith, that it becomes a most eminent act of religion, since it is directly addressed to God, concealed in the form of a feeble and mortal man, but invested with the divine authority. — *Med. 9.*

4. We must obey not as if we were doing it only to please men, but with a good heart, doing the will of God manifested to us by our superiors, and as members and servants of Jesus Christ, from whom they have received

the right of commanding, and whose divine person they represent in our regard. — *Med.* 72.

5. It is necessary, my very dear Brother, that you should allow yourself to be conducted as a child of obedience who has no other view than to obey, and in obeying to do the will of God. Be careful never to use these expressions : *I will* or *I will not* or *I must* ; these are horrible expressions and cannot but withdraw from us the graces of God which He grants only to those who have no other will than His, because it is only self-will that leads to hell, as St. Bernard says. The principal virtue to which you should apply yourself is obedience. Abandon yourself very much in meditation to the guidance of God, and protest that you do not desire anything but the accomplishment of His holy will. — *Letters.*

IV. THE OBEDIENCE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

St. John Baptist De La Salle who consulted Mr. Tronson and Mr. Baüin, was so well convinced that God spoke to him through them, that nothing could prevent him from executing what he had undertaken by their advice. He said : *I do not change what I have undertaken through their advice, because I look upon what they have advised me to do as the command of God.*

The condition of dependence and submission had such charms for him, that he could not remain superior. It is impossible to express with what respect he obeyed his successor in all things. He did nothing without his knowledge and order : and when it was

sometimes represented to him that in quality of a priest he should not so easily submit to a person who was inferior to him in every respect, he answered with some warmth : *And should not the ministers of the Lord humble themselves ? Are they to teach only by words and not by example ?*

After his resignation, he never wrote to Brother Barthélemy without reiterating the assurance of his disposition to obey him in all things ; in one of his letters he says : *You know that I am always ready to obey you in all things, being now subject to authority and not having made the vow of obedience to do what pleases me.*

In the last conference he made to the novices and which was on obedience, the saint said to them : *If you are perfectly obedient, you will appear before the tribunal of Our Lord with confidence, because, when He shall ask you to give an account of your conduct, you will be able to answer : Lord, please ask my Director : I have not done anything except in obedience to his orders, with the view that to obey him was to obey Thee, as Thou didst say in the Gospel. For this reason, you will not have anything to apprehend. — Spirit and Virtues, Chap. XXIII.*





XXXIX

MENTAL PRAYER

I. THE EXCELLENCE AND NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER.

1. Hold mental prayer in great esteem, since it is the foundation and support of all virtues, and the source of the light and all the graces we need to sanctify ourselves, and to discharge the duties of our employment. — *Collection.*

2. We must apply ourselves to mental prayer : 1. Because being the first exercise of the interior life, it is also the first means of becoming interior. 2. Because, according to St. Chrysostom, mental prayer is an angelic exercise, and those who apply themselves thereto, lead an angelic life. 3. Because, being a conversation with God, mental prayer produces the effect of making the soul occupy itself entirely with the things which pertain to His service. — *Collection.*

3. Be careful to apply yourself well to mental prayer, because the blessing which God gives to other exercises depends on this, and it obtains many graces for you. — *Letters.*

4. You are here in a house of prayer ; this

should be your principal occupation ; the spirit of God will dwell in it, and God Himself will pour down His blessings on it but inasmuch as it is a house of prayer ; and from the moment you lose the spirit and love of prayer, God will look on you only with displeasure, and as unworthy of an employment which is His own work, because you make of His house a den of thieves. — *Med.* 62.

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF MENTAL PRAYER.

1. The fruit of frequent mental prayer is to enjoy God by anticipation as far as lively faith can procure this happiness here below. — *Med.* 177.

2. If you love mental prayer, God will be the nourishment of your soul ; He will be with you and make you eat at His table, as St. John says in the Apocalypse, and you will then have the advantage of having Him present in your actions and not to have any other view than that of pleasing Him. You will even hunger after Him as the Wise man says ; for, according to the words of the Royal Prophet, you will be satiated only when you shall be in the enjoyment of His glory in heaven. Render yourself worthy, by a holy life, of being favoured with such a grace and of possessing such a happiness. — *Med.* 177.

3. It is the souls that apply themselves much to mental prayer and love this holy exercise

that God fills with consolation ; therefore, souls that are tepid, slothful, and little attached to mental prayer, must not be astonished if they are not of the number of those whom God cherishes in a singular manner, and to whom He communicates Himself even to familiarity. — *Med.* 18.

4. It will be through mental prayer that the Holy Ghost will descend on you, and, as Our Lord promised His holy Apostles, teach you all the truths of religion and the holy maxims of Christianity, which you must know how to practise very perfectly, being obliged to teach them to others. — *Med.* 191.

5. The more earnestly you apply yourself to meditation, the more facility will God grant you to touch hearts, and consequently the more good will you do to the souls confided to you. — *Med.* 148.

6. Often reflect that you should be a man of mental prayer ; for, you should pray not only for yourself, but also for those who are confided to you, and for their spiritual necessities ; and in order that your prayers may have this effect, you should join mortification thereto. — *Med.* 187.

7. The obligation under which you are of instructing your pupils and bringing them up in the spirit of Christianity should induce you to be very assiduous in prayer, in order to obtain from God the graces you need to acquit

yourself well of your employment. Indeed, it is prayer which obtains for you the light you need to form Jesus Christ in the hearts of the children confided to you, and to communicate the spirit of God to them. Be convinced that in order to be filled with the spirit of God as much as you should in the state in which His providence has placed you, you are under the obligation of frequently conversing with Him. — *Med.* 80.

8. You have the advantage of participating in the apostolic functions in teaching catechism daily to the children confided to you, and in instructing them in the maxims of the Holy Gospel; but you will not produce much fruit in their regard, if you do not fully possess the spirit of mental prayer, because it is mental prayer alone that can give unction to your words, and render them really efficacious, causing them to penetrate to the bottom of hearts. — *Med.* 159.

III. MEANS TO MAKE MENTAL PRAYER WELL.

1. The only and sure means of preparing the soul for union with God is the constant practice of humility, mortification, obedience and purity of heart. — *Spirit and Virtues.*

2. We must practise recollection, because it disposes the soul and gives it facility to apply itself to the presence of God and the exercise of mental prayer. — *Collection.*

3. Apply yourself much to mental prayer, and endeavour to perform all your actions in the spirit of prayer; the more faithful you are to this practice, the more will God bless you. — *Letters.*

4. The first thing to be done in mental prayer is to penetrate ourselves with the presence of God; this we should do through a sentiment of faith based on some passage of Holy Scripture. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

5. Do not look for consolation in mental prayer; hold to what is of faith, to what leads to the hatred and detestation of sin, to detachment from created things, to the imitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the exercise of the virtues He practised, striving to imitate Him as perfectly as possible. — *Collection.*

6. Be careful to employ all the time of mental prayer well; devote more time to affections and resolutions than to reasoning and consideration. Do not make merely vague and general resolutions; but let them be specific, and take suitable means to keep them. — *Collection.*

7. When you converse with God in mental prayer, or when you think of Him, always bear in mind your own baseness and infinite unworthiness, which will keep you profoundly respectful and annihilated in His presence. — *Collection.*

8. The soul should occupy itself in mental prayer with what is proper to it in this life, which is to know and love God, and to take all the means necessary to attain these ends. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

9. In order to be very pure and solid, the occupation of the soul with God in mental prayer should take place in the inmost of the soul; because, if it were made merely an occupation of the mind, or superficially as to the heart, it would easily be subject to sensible and human distractions which would prevent its fruit, and this occupation of the mind not having penetrated the soul, would be only transitory and consequently leave the soul afterwards in dryness and void of God. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

10. You get restless because mental prayer is too long, which is a sign that you have little love for it. But it is the food of the soul; would you neglect it? If you cannot apply yourself to one act, apply yourself to another; apply yourself thereto by reflection in the time of aridity; humble yourself before God at the sight of your faults. The dissipation to which you give way is the cause of the difficulty you find to apply yourself to mental prayer; it is the mark and effect of the derangement of your interior; be very careful therefore to correct this fault; apply yourself especially to know well the method of mental prayer in use in the society, and follow it. I am not surprised

that, not following it, you find such trouble to apply yourself to it ; you now have the means of applying yourself to God and often entering into yourself ; do it, I pray you. — *Letters.*

11. Retain some of the good thoughts of your morning mental prayer, so as to nourish your mind therewith from time to time during the day. — *Collection.*

IV. LOVE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR MENTAL PRAYER.

In order to assure the success of his Institute, the holy Founder depended less on his devotedness than on the help of God. However, he worked with as much zeal as if the result depended on him alone ; but he prayed with humility and perseverance, because he knew by faith that no work is solid or durable unless God Himself builds it up. Notwithstanding his innumerable labours and the incessant attention he bestowed on the schools, he consecrated long hours, and sometimes whole days and nights to mental prayer. His life was, so to speak, an uninterrupted prayer. Even in the midst of affairs, he did not cease to be occupied with God. His air of recollection and his words full of the supernatural spirit indicated that he did not, for an instant, lose the presence of God. He realized so well that herein lay his strength, that he devoted all his free time to mental prayer. — *Life*, by Guibert.





XL

THE WORD OF GOD

HOW WE ARE TO HEAR, PRACTISE AND TEACH
THE WORD OF GOD.

1. *My words*, says Our Lord, *are spirit and life*,¹ that is they procure the true life, which is that of the soul, for those who willingly hear them, and who, after hearing them with attention, practise them with love. — *Med.* 196.

2. How powerful the word of God is to touch hearts ! How happy would you be, if this divine word were to penetrate so intimately into your heart, that you would no longer be attached to any creature ! — *Med.* 180.

3. Often meditate on the words of Holy Scripture in order to encourage yourself to do good, and to live up to the spirit of your state ; because the word of God which is contained therein produces this effect. — *Med.* 192.

4. As we should be convinced that a superior is the minister of Jesus Christ, and that God is in him and speaks to us by his mouth, we should receive his words as coming from God Himself. — *Med.* 21.

5. Those who cannot hear God spoken of nor relish His word in the Holy Scriptures or in pious books, never give themselves wholly to Him, because it is usually the reading of the Holy Scriptures and pious books that fills us with His spirit. — *Med. 64.*

6. As neither readings nor discourses of themselves touch the heart but God Himself who employs these means, we must beseech Him to enable us to draw therefrom the fruit which He desires. — *Collection.*

7. When you hear the word of God, be careful to apply it to yourself, and reflect on the conformity or opposition of your interior to the truth announced to you. — *Collection.*

8. After an exhortation, thank God for having heard His word; ask His pardon for the faults of which you have been made conscious by means of these truths, and ask yourself what profit you have derived from such discourse. — *Collection.*

9. If God employs men to speak to those to whom they make known Christian truths and to prepare their hearts to become docile to them, it is for Him alone to guide their steps and to give their hearts the docility which is necessary to relish the holy truths which He makes known to them. Do not therefore content yourself with reading or learning from men what you are to teach others; ask of God to imprint it on you in such a manner that you

may apply to yourself the words of St. Paul : *Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.*¹ — *Med. 3.*

10. It is from God, of whom those who speak are but the organ, that the word should proceed which makes Him known to those whom they instruct. It is therefore He who speaks through them when they speak of Him and of what regards Him. — *Med. 3.*

11. You who have been entrusted with the education of children, should become skilful in the art of speaking to God and speaking of Him ; but rest assured that you will win your pupils over to God but inasmuch as you shall have learned well how to speak to Him and of Him. — *Med. 64.*

FRUITS OF SANCTIFICATION THAT THE EXHORTATIONS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE PRODUCED.

The labours of St. John Baptist De La Salle, watered by his sweat, his tears and sufferings, were blessed by God. His words received with docile hearts, bore fruit a hundredfold. He had the joy of seeing his novices, like tender young trees, take the form that his hand gave them. He trained them without contradiction on their part, and he made the impressions he desired on their souls open to grace. The children modelled on their father showed by their conduct that they were at the school of a great master in virtue, and that they knew how to profit by his instructions and example. Even if they had not attracted attention by the novelty of their habit, their inviolable silence, their modesty,

their constant recollection and their unalterable meekness in the midst of outrages, would have acquainted everyone with the fact that they were novices or Brothers of a new Institute.

He could apply to them these words of St. Paul : *You are my joy and my crown ;*¹ and these words of the Beloved Disciple : *I have no greater grace than this, to hear that my children walk in truth.*² — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. II, Chap. XI.

1. Philip. IV. 1.

2. III John. I. 4.





XLI

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

I. THE PASSION OF OUR LORD SHOULD INSPIRE US WITH A LIVELY HATRED OF SIN.

1. Can we contemplate Our Lord in His Passion without having a lively hatred of sin, and great sorrow for those we have committed, since we cannot be unaware that our sins have been the cause of so many sufferings and His death? Not to wish to cease sinning is not to wish that He cease suffering. Do we not know that as many sins as we commit, so many torments do we cause Him? We crucify Him anew, according to St. Paul, and inflict on Him another species of death, which is more painful to Him than the first. — *Med.* 27.

2. We who have been born and live in sin should become conformable to Our Lord as a victim and suffer with Him, if we wish to have Him for our head, to be one of His members, and destroy sin in ourselves. It is therefore necessary, as St. Paul tells us, that neither *tribulation* nor *distress*, nor *famine*, nor *nakedness*, nor *danger*, nor *persecution* should *separate us from the love of Christ*.¹ If like unto Him,

1. Rom. VIII. 35.

continues the Apostle, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, we must, in the midst of these sufferings remain victorious, animated, by the example of Him who has loved us even to dying for love of us. — *Med.* 152.

3. Adore the five wounds of Our Lord, and bear in mind that He has preserved them in His sacred body only as glorious marks of the victory which He has gained over hell and sin, from which He has withdrawn the human race by His sufferings and death. Often cast your eyes upon so holy an object; consider the wounds of the body of Our Lord as so many mouths which reproach you for your sins, and which recall the memory of all that He suffered to efface them. — *Med.* 28.

II. THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SHOULD INSPIRE US WITH ESTEEM AND LOVE OF SUFFERING.

1. Enter into sentiments of humility and confusion for evading the occasions of suffering, whereas Our Lord sought them for love of you. — *Med.* 93.

2. Jesus Christ suffered in His sacred body the pains to which man was condemned as a sinner; whereas we who have so much offended God, look upon ourselves and wish to be

looked upon as innocent and just; we look for, and believe we have a right to look for our ease; we are wholly occupied with avoiding labour and pain. — *Med.* 93.

3. In a vision, Our Lord having given St. Catherine of Sienna the free choice between a crown of gold and a crown of thorns, she chose the crown of thorns. Would you make a like choice? — *Med.* 118.

4. St. Magdalen de Pazzi, at the age of twelve, made a sort of crown with thorns, and having pressed it on her head, she passed a whole night in unutterable pain. Is it thus that you are pleased to suffer something for God and in conformity with Our Lord? — *Med.* 130.

5. The Eternal Father will not recognize your soul as His beloved daughter but inasmuch as, in imitation of our divine Saviour, it will love suffering and give marks thereof by the daily exercise of mortification. — *Med.* 152.

6. Do not be surprised if God sends you occasions to suffer; the more He sends you, the more He shows you His love, and the more happy you should be... It is especially by suffering that God purifies you and bestows abundant graces on you. — *Med.* 124.

7. There are two sure means of knowing the will of God and doing it; in the first place, to have recourse to prayer; then, if in doubt, decide in favour of what will cause you most

pain and make you die to yourself the more.
— *Med.* 128.

8. Endeavour to draw from the heart of Jesus in order that they may pass into your own, sentiments of conformity to the will of God, and courage that will make you look for occasions of suffering. — *Med.* 28.

9. Are you prepared to follow Our Lord as well when He makes you suffer as when He fills you with consolations? Alas! as soon as anyone says something that causes you pain, or when a reproach is addressed to you, do you not show some resentment? And yet, it is especially on such occasions that you should show that you follow Our Lord, and that you are one of His disciples. — *Med.* 144.

III. THE PASSION OF OUR LORD SHOULD INSPIRE US WITH ESTEEM AND LOVE OF HUMILIATIONS.

1. Esteem especially what will humble you and be most opposed to your inclinations. There is no better means of destroying your pride than the frequent and daily practice of humiliations. If you desire and love them in order to be united to Our Lord in everything, He will furnish you with many occasions besides those which are already furnished you by your disposition. If you have this thirst for

humiliations and estrangement from the world, you will succeed with the grace of God. — *Letters.*

2. Let us love what is most humiliating in our profession, in order to participate in something in the abjection of Jesus Christ in His birth. — *Med.* 86.

3. Bless God, my dear Brothers, for permitting you to be treated like His Son, who was more outraged than you ; and He was God. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XX.

IV. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AT THE FEET OF JESUS CHRIST.

Everything became easy for St. John Baptist De La Salle at the feet of our divine Lord, because he there found the remedy for his ills or the strength to support them ; he obtained their cessation or alleviation from them ; he saw his prayers heard, or he learned that it was to his advantage that they should not be heard. He was wont to cast himself at the feet of Jesus at every juncture and almost without ceasing in order to obtain light, strength, grace and assistance ; he always arose satisfied, because he arose with new courage to suffer, with new attraction for God's good pleasure, and more entire resignation to the dispensations of Providence. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVI.





XLII

PATIENCE

I. PATIENCE BEARS ALL THINGS.

1. Patience disposes the heart to suffer all physical and mental ills for the love of God, and in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Esteem this virtue highly, and practise it often ; abandon yourself entirely to God, to suffer all that is most trying : 1. When such things present themselves to your mind, submitting to and accepting them through submission to the will of God ; 2. When they happen, receiving them patiently, humbly and without complaining ; 3. Bearing them silently, not saying anything about them to anyone ; 4. Bearing them with esteem, appreciating them as real treasures ; 5. Desiring them, and accepting them gladly and gratefully. — *Collection*.

2. Patience and silence are necessary, especially when you are addressed in abusive language, or when anything is done to you to cause you pain. — *Med.* 92.

3. If, because you wish to do well and tend to perfection, you were made to suffer all sorts of abuse and contempt, would you be ready

to endure it all with patience? It is on such occasions that it is seen whether virtue is solid. — *Med.* 118.

4. Voluntarily suffer all the trials and contradictions of life; do not be troubled or complain about anything. You must look upon everything that you have to suffer from your neighbour as a present and benefit from God. It is only pure faith that can inspire such sentiments. — *Med.* 87.

5. Do not allow yourself to be carried away by your vivacity; a little patience, and God will appease all; He wishes you to acquire merits by your sufferings. Watch over yourself so as to correct your hastiness. — *Letters.*

6. You say that you fear not to be sufficiently patient to suffer everything painful that you may meet with; this must be your daily study; silence and reserve will obtain for you patience. — *Letters.*

7. You cannot do much, either within or without, unless you are humble, submissive and patient. — *Letters.*

II. PATIENCE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

St. John Baptist De La Salle knew so well how to moderate sadness and the other passions that are moved at the approach of affliction, that he did not outwardly manifest that he felt the least struggle within. Nothing indicated trouble, displeasure or bitterness. Whether he suffered bodily pain or

moral anguish, he was equally master of himself, and remained at peace in the midst of the greatest afflictions, according to the words of Our Lord : *In your patience you shall possess your souls.*¹

In order to acquire this heroic patience for which every day multiplied occasions, he continually repeated these words of Job : *Blessed be the name of the Lord.*² They were so familiar to him, that they are looked upon as his motto. When most painful news reached him, he would repeat the whole text : *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done : blessed be the name of the Lord.*³

A man so patient could not but inspire those who were under him with the same sentiments, and this he did with great ardour, being convinced that for those who instruct youth, it is necessary to excel in the virtue of patience. He would often say to them : " You will spoil everything, unless you carefully control in yourself the impatience which usually offends all those whom you instruct. " — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXV.

1. Luke. XXI. 19.

2. Job. I. 21.

3. Job. I. 21.





XLIII

POVERTY

I. THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF POVERTY.

1. In order to begin to belong altogether to God, it is necessary to become poor ; it is even necessary to have as much affection for poverty as worldlings have for riches. This is the first step that Our Lord wishes us to take to enter into the way of perfection. — *Med.* 81.

2. Poverty is a sure and immovable foundation for those who have real faith and who are interiorly animated with the spirit of Our Lord. You cannot do better than establish your fortune on this foundation ; Our Blessed Lord found this the most solid, and upon this the holy Apostles began to build the edifice of the Church. — *Med.* 176.

3. Have you really renounced everything in heart and affection ? Have you placed yourself under the sole protection of God and with an entire abandonment to Providence ? — *Med.* 139.

4. Rest assured that as long as your heart remains attached to poverty and to every-

thing that will serve to humiliate you, you will produce fruit in souls. — *Med.* 86.

II. THE LOVE OF POVERTY AND OF POOR CHILDREN.

1. Cherish poverty as Jesus loved it, and as the surest means of advancing in perfection. — *Collection.*

2. The poverty that Jesus practised in an eminent degree in His birth, should engage us to have much love for this virtue, because it was for the purpose of making us love it, that He was born in this state. Let us therefore not be astonished when we are in want even of things necessary, since Jesus in His birth was in want of everything. — *Med.* 86.

3. In order to acquit yourself well of your employment, you should have much love for the poor, because the principal function you exercise is to instruct them. Look upon them as the images of Jesus Christ, and as being in the best disposition to receive His spirit abundantly. Be convinced that the more you will love and devote yourself to them, the more you will belong to Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 173.

4. When we have made ourselves voluntarily poor in order to imitate Jesus Christ, we also, as He did, love those whom God has made poor. You have poor children to in-

struct every day. Love them tenderly in imitation of Our Lord. Prefer them to those who are not poor; for Our Lord does not say the Gospel is preached to the rich, but *to the poor*.¹

It is they also who are entrusted to you, and to whom you are obliged to announce the truths of the Gospel. It was the poor who most generally followed Jesus Christ Our Lord, and it is they also who are the most disposed to profit by His doctrine, because they offer less exterior obstacles. — *Med.* 166.

5. You know that you are charged with the instruction of the poor; therefore, imitate the tenderness of the saints in their regard, and overcome nature when it suggests to you to have more consideration for the rich. Our Lord regards the good you do to the poor as done to Himself. — *Med.* 150.

6. You are entrusted by your state with instructing poor children; do you love them? Do you honour Our Lord in their person, and with this view, do you prefer them to those who are relatively in comfortable circumstances? — *Med.* 133.

III. THE PRACTICE OF POVERTY.

1. Have nothing as your own and look upon everything you have as being common to all your Brothers, giving or relinquishing it without difficulty. — *Collection*.

1. Luke. VII. 22.

2. Deprive yourself as much as possible, not only of the superfluous, but even of what is useful and necessary ; and be happy when, without your concurrence, you suffer some privation. — *Collection.*

3. We made profession of renouncing all things when we left the world ; but have we really left all ? Are we no longer attached to anything ? We will know whether it is so, if we are glad to be poor, and if we do not wish for conveniences or to possess anything. — *Med. 97.*

4. You must love poverty, my dear Brother ; Our Lord was very poor, although He might have been rich ; you should therefore imitate our divine Model. But it appears to me that you would wish not to be in want of anything in order to be content. Who would not desire to be poor on this condition ? Would not the great and powerful of this world abandon all their riches to enjoy an advantage that would render them happier than princes and kings ? Remember, I beg you, that you have not come into religion to have every satisfaction and convenience, but rather to embrace poverty and its consequences. I say its consequences, because it would be of no use to love poverty, if you were not also to love everything that depends on it, and what may make you practise it. — *Letters.*

5. Poverty should be so dear to you as to make you practise it in everything, so that,

holding only to God, you may find in Him what is not found in creatures, and that you may be in a condition to receive from His hands many graces for yourself and others; but what you need especially is to love the poor, and the necessary zeal to lead them to God. — *Med.* 179.

6. Earnestly pray for entire detachment from everything, so that you may attach yourself to Him alone, in whom all happiness in this world and in the next consists. — *Med.* 35.

IV. ATTRACTION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR POVERTY.

The connection between poverty and perfection is so essential that Our Lord makes one depend on the other. He says : *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor.*¹ St. John Baptist De La Salle wished to be perfect, and this desire made it a law for him to be poor.

After distributing his goods to those who were in need, having become poor for the love of God and like to those whom he had fed in the time of famine, he wished, at least once, to satisfy his ardent desire for humiliations and practices of poverty, by going from door to door begging a morsel of bread. Poverty then triumphed in the heart of the impoverished canon, who, looking upon the present of bread given him in alms as a morsel from heaven, wished to eat it on his knees, through respect and devotion.

He was never ashamed of his state. Delighted to appear and to pass as a poor man, he was careful to manifest all the exterior marks of poverty; everything

1. Matt. XIX. 21.

that he used was poor, was indicative of poverty : his dress, his furniture and his room. The material was ordinary and simple, the food was coarse, poor and wretched beds were the only ones that suited him : he would have nothing otherwise. Accustomed to be poorly dressed, fed and lodged, he did not perceive that there was more or less, except for the purpose of thanking God. The most inconvenient room was his choice and the only kind that pleased him. As it was not a poverty without want or pain that he had sought, so neither was it such that he found and loved ; but a poverty that was humiliating, inconvenient and troublesome.

St. John Baptist De La Salle manifested joy when his communities were in want of necessities and seemed more pleased to gather the bitter fruits of extreme poverty and the difficult virtues which it presents for practice, than to see abundance enter the house. “ Ah ! my dear Brothers ”, would he then exclaim, “ God be blessed ! ”

He was one day informed that there was nothing for the Brothers’ supper, and there was a considerable number of them ; raising his heart to God, he besought Him not to forget His servants, and shortly afterwards a large alms was brought to him.

When, like the Apostles, he had left all, an apostolic heart was given him : a heart that could not esteem, desire or relish anything but God ; that looked upon the things of this world as trash ; that was interested only in the glory of God, the salvation of souls and the good of religion ; that had no other ambition than that of resembling Jesus Christ ; finally, a heart that knew no other treasure than that of Calvary and the Cross. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XIX.





XLIV

SIN

I. SAD EFFECTS OF SIN.

1. We cannot but be aware that our sins were the cause of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. Not to wish to cease sinning is not to wish Him to cease suffering. — *Med.* 27.

2. Do we not know that as many sins as we commit, so many torments do we inflict upon Our Lord? We crucify Him anew, according to St. Paul, and we put Him to death in another way which is more cruel and painful than the first. — *Med.* 27.

3. We may say with reason that he who has wallowed in habits of sin has in a certain way lost his liberty, because he has made himself a captive and miserable, and because Our Lord says : *Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.* ¹

4. The entrance to the soul that does not live a new life, the life of grace, is closed to all interior movements of the spirit of God, and it has no movements but such as are human and natural. It is an effect of blindness of the mind and hardness of the heart which

1. John. VIII. 34.

sin has caused in us that those who are enlightened only for the things of this world, have no light or comprehension of God and His service. — *Med.* 32.

5. The soul that is spiritually dead no longer thinks of anything but the earth ; it inclines but towards the earth, towards the world and the things of the world, because it no longer has any relish for God or what leads to Him. To hear God spoken of is for it a torture ; to make meditation, a martyrdom ; Holy Communion is insipid ; it keeps away from confession, because it does not want to make known its sins ; it is guided only by its own light, and its light is false. Thus all the means that contribute to keep up the life of the soul are useless, because it rejects them ; and this is caused by the loss of the spirit of life which was in it, and which is the spirit of its state. — *Med.* 68.

II. WE MUST AVOID SIN.

1. The fruit we can derive from the contemplation of the wounds of Our Lord is to make us renounce sin entirely, to mortify our passions and to thwart our inclinations which are too human and too natural. — *Med.* 28.

2. Beseech the Most Blessed Virgin in virtue of the extraordinary grace which God granted her in exempting her from original sin, to obtain for you that of being altogether freed from the corruption of the age for the rest of

your life, so that there may not remain any habit of sin ; which habit renders a soul unworthy of God's special graces. — *Med.* 82.

3. The prophet Ezechiel tells us that penance does not only obtain for us the pardon of our sins, but that it also preserves us from relapse, which preservation is the greatest happiness in this world ; for, after having said : *If the wicked do penance for his sins, none of his sins shall be imputed to him*, he adds, *he hath done justice and judgment, he shall surely live.*¹ — *Med.* 4.

4. If we wish to free ourselves altogether from sin, we cannot do better than to apply ourselves to prayer. Indeed, no matter how many sins one may have committed who loves prayer, he will find in meditation, in the midst of his greatest disorders, a prompt and easy remedy to obtain the grace of repentance and pardon. — *Med.* 36.

III. WE MUST EXPIATE SIN.

1. You must all expiate your past sins by penance in order to regain the salvation you have lost, and recover the facility of returning to God from whom you have separated. Hence, God says by a prophet : *Be converted to me with all your heart in fasting, in weeping and in mourning,*² because these are the surest

1. Ezech. XXXIII. 16.

2. Joel. II. 12.

means of returning to God when we have lost Him. Patience is what contributes most to procure that purity of heart which David prayed for so earnestly when he said : *Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin*¹. So convinced was the penitent king that the stains of a penitent soul cannot be washed out except by tears that have their source in an humble and contrite heart.

Let us often ask of God the grace of cleansing ourselves so perfectly that there may not remain any trace of our sins, and let us contribute thereto for our part, by the penance we shall perform. — *Med. 4.*

2. It is said of St. John that he preached penance for the remission of sins ; and it is penance which obtains the remission of sins for those who have offended God, according to what St. Peter said to the Jews in the Acts of the Apostles : *Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*,² for this is the proper end of this virtue, and it alone can appease the heart of God irritated against sinners. — *Med. 4.*

3. We who have been born and lived in sin, should become conformable to Jesus Christ as a victim, and suffer with Him, if we wish to have Him as our head, be one of His members and destroy sin in ourselves. — *Med. 152.*

1. Ps. L. 4.

2. Acts. III. 19.

IV. WE MUST MAKE THOSE CONFIDED TO OUR CARE AVOID SIN.

1. The spirit of the Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children, and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their innocence if they have not lost it, and inspiring them with a great aversion and horror for sin and whatever might cause them to lose purity. — *Rules*, Chap. II.

2. Induce those whom you teach to look upon sin as a shameful disease which infects souls, renders them unworthy of drawing near to God and appearing before Him : inspire them with the love of virtue ; impress them with sentiments of piety and act in such a manner that God may not cease to reign in them, because then they will be free from sin, or at least, they will avoid mortal sin which causes death to the soul. — *Med.* 67.

3. Endeavour by all possible means to keep your pupils from bad company and to have them associate only with those who are good, so that, receiving by these means none but favourable impressions, they may practise virtue with great facility. — *Med.* 50.

V. HATRED OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR SIN.

The hatred of St. John Baptist De La Salle for sin was proportioned to his love for God. Always being armed to combat it, he inspired hatred for it by that

which he himself felt. In general, his aversion for sin did not allow him to see it committed if his voice could prevent it or the scandal resulting from it. He was not on this account less compassionate for hardened sinners; he wept over their condition and endeavoured to heal their wounds. He would not have believed himself a friend of Our Lord, if he had not had, for sinners redeemed by His precious blood, an attraction proportioned to his love, for our divine Redeemer. Keeping united to God by an almost continual meditation, he drew therefrom the spirit that vivifies, the unction that touches, the virtue that acts and the grace that changes the most rebellious hearts; he thus became in the hands of God an instrument of salvation which efficaciously produced penance and conversion in the most obdurate hearts. What he began by earnest, efficacious words, addressed to insensible hearts, was finished by prayer and the austerity of his mortifications. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XIV.



XLV

VENIAL SIN

I. THE NATURE AND MALICE OF VENIAL SIN.

1. Venial sin is that which does not altogether deprive the soul of grace, but diminishes and weakens the love of God in us ; it renders us slothful in His service and insensibly disposes us to mortal sin, — *Duties of a Christian.*

2. Venial sin may be remitted by various acts of piety ; for instance, by practising some mortifications, depriving ourselves of some pleasure for the love of God, bestowing something in alms, reciting some prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer, the Seven Penitential Psalms, or simply the *Miserere*. These actions and practices are very useful for this end, provided they be accompanied by sincere sorrow for our sins, confidence and love of God, — *Duties of a Christian.*

3. Does a sin, no matter how trivial it may appear, give you more pain than all else that you might suffer ? — *Med. 125.*

II. WE MUST AVOID VENIAL SIN AND EVERYTHING ELSE THAT IS DISPLEASING TO GOD.

1. We must avoid the least venial sins, though they seem trivial :

1. Because they may deprive us of many graces.

2. Because they deprive our soul of part of the interior light which makes it know what it should do to advance in perfection.

3. Because they destroy the vigour of the soul and deprive us of the interior strength which enables us to do good with ease, especially the good opposed to the sins committed.
— *Collection.*

2. We must never wilfully do the least thing displeasing to God for :

1. Would it not be a great loss to be deprived of one of God's graces through any imperfection ?

2. A soul that is given to God should live and be animated by His spirit. Now an imperfection prevents the infusion of the grace of God, just as a pebble obstructs the free passage of water in a pipe or canal.

3. A slight matter grieves God residing in a soul that is, or wishes, to be His : *Thou hast wounded my heart, my spouse, with one hair of thy neck*¹ ; as though a single hair disar-

1. Cant. IV. 9.

ranged sufficed to be offensive to the sight and to lessen the love of the Spouse.

4. Our Lord desired by His sufferings and death to banish not only sin but every imperfection from the souls of His chosen ones : *Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*¹

5. Jesus Christ was careful, says St. Paul, *to present to Himself a glorious Church, the faithful soul, not having spot or wrinkle.*² By wrinkles we may understand imperfections. — *Collection.*

3. You should have such an aversion for everything approaching sin, that, according to St. Paul, you should refrain from its very shadow and appearance. But as this is an advantage which you cannot have of yourself, it is important that for this end you should continually implore the help of God. — *Med. 39.*

4. Ask of God a pure heart that will have aversion not only for grave sins, but also for everything that can stain your conscience and render you displeasing to His sovereign majesty. — *Med. 36.*

5. What penance do you perform for the many sins you have committed? What fasts and other mortifications, either self-imposed or of obligation, do you perform? Do you

1. Matth. V. 48.

2. Ephes. V. 27.

perform any penance for those which you do not know? And do you not think that there may be more hidden than known? — *Collection.*

6. Consider that a second sin of the same kind is greater than the first, that the third is greater than the second, and so on, and that perhaps it is the hundredth time that you are confessing it, after so many promises of not committing it again, and yet you have committed it with as little wariness and excuse as the first time. — *Collection.*

7. Do you reflect that there is never the least excuse for sinning or committing the least imperfection, even should the whole world perish; and yet, the little account you make of them should make you deplore your faults most bitterly. — *Collection.*

8. Do you well understand that in order to receive absolution for a venial sin, you must have such sorrow for it as to be resolved not to commit it again, so that, if after having confessed it, you still love the action of your sin or its cause, it is much to be feared that you have not had a true sorrow? — *Collection.*

9. What would you say to a heretic or an infamous sinner after a general confession? Would you not tell him that henceforward he should not fall into sin again? And why not address the same language to yourself after the confession of a venial sin, since you are as

much obliged to renounce it in order to obtain pardon, as another, a mortal sin in order to have it forgiven ? — *Collection.*

III. WE MUST MAKE THOSE CONFIDED TO OUR CARE AVOID VENIAL SIN.

1. Consider that the end that Our Lord had in coming to this world having been to destroy sin, this should also be the principal end of the institution of the Christian Schools. Your zeal should induce you especially not to suffer anything in the children confided to you that would be displeasing to God. If you observe anything in them that offends Him, you should immediately do everything you can to remedy it. — *Med. 202.*

2. Are you careful to remove from your pupils everything that might endanger their morals, and especially bad companions ? Do you inspire them with horror for them ? Are you so vigilant over their conduct as to prevent them from doing the least wrong while they are confided to you, and do you furnish them with the means of avoiding all dangerous occasions when they are beyond your supervision ? — *Med. III.*

3. Consider that the principal end of Our Lord in coming into this world having been to destroy sin, this should also be the principal end of the institution of the Christian Schools. — *Med. 202.*

4. Your zeal should induce you not to suffer anything displeasing to God in the children confided to you. If you observe anything displeasing to God in them, you should immediately apply a remedy, and thus show your zeal for the glory of God. — *Med.* 202.

5. It is for you who are the masters of those whom you train, to take all possible care to make them really free with the freedom of the children of God, which Jesus Christ merited for us by His death. For this purpose, you have to employ two means with regard to your pupils; the first is meekness and patience; the second is prudence in reprimands and corrections. — *Med.* 203.

IV. HORROR OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR THE LEAST SINS.

His slightest faults, always present to his mind, rendered him, in his own estimation, horrible in the eyes of Him who is holy by excellence. When considering them in the infinitely pure mirror of the holiness of God, none appeared small to him, and he bore the shame and confusion of his offenses before God: after the example of the penitent king, he was ashamed to appear disfigured before so august a Majesty. His hatred of sin made him fear its shadow and appearance, and he offered to God the perpetual sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXIV.



XLVI

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

I. THE DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY FOR THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

1. You know, my very dear Brother, that in order to receive the sacraments with due dispositions, it is necessary to have much faith and fervour. Be exact in going to confession and making acts of contrition. Be careful not to omit confession; it is confession and communion that sustain you in your troubles and you should esteem it a great happiness to communicate often. — *Letters*.

2. Act in such a way as to have your conscience perfectly purified before receiving Holy Communion; otherwise, you would show little love for God, and little respect for Jesus Christ whom you are going to receive. — *Med.* 53.

3. Ask of God a pure heart that will abhor not only grievous sins, but also everything that might sully the conscience, and render you disagreeable to the divine Majesty. — *Med.* 36.

4. Consider of what moment it is to make your examination of conscience and confession

well, since they are the remedies for your spiritual ills, and since they do not act as remedies, unless we perform them with all possible exactitude and with holy dispositions of heart. — *Collection.*

5. Would you be ready to die after your examination? If not, you should fear that it was not well made. — *Collection.*

6. Do you well understand that in order to have absolution of a venial sin, you must have such sorrow for it as to be resolved not to commit it again; so that, if after having confessed it, you still love the sin or its cause, it is much to be feared that you have not had a true sorrow? — *Collection.*

7. Is your contrition heartfelt? Do you strive to break your attachment to the things that are the cause of your sins? — *Collection.*

8. Understand well wherein the amendment you have resolved upon consists. What use do you make of the examination of conscience on your most notable defects? — *Collection.*

II. THE OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIAN TEACHERS TO MAKE THEIR PUPILS RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS.

1. After having taught your pupils how to make their confession well, you should see that they go often; and you should especially prepare them to receive their First Communion

holily and as frequently as permitted, so that they may preserve the graces received the first time they performed this holy action. Oh ! if you understood how much good you would do them by helping them to preserve and augment grace by the frequent use of the sacraments, you would never tire of instructing and exhorting them ! — *Med.* 200.

2. As God has given to men two sure means, which are prayer and the sacraments, to withdraw them from sin and preserve grace, there is nothing that we should inculcate more in the children in order to inspire them with horror for vice than the love of prayer and the frequent use of the sacraments. We must get them to pray frequently, and to pray with attention ; we must teach them the holy dispositions that they should bring to the sacraments, and urge them to receive them frequently in order to keep their consciences free from the stain of sin. These are the two principal things that you should have in view in instructing your pupils, so as to keep them from sin. — *Med.* 56.



XLVII

PENANCE (MORTIFICATION)

I. THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF MORTIFICATION.

1. We are Christians only inasmuch as we are conformable to Our Lord, and it is the love of suffering and mortification which renders us like unto Him. Endeavour, therefore, never to pass a day without mortifying yourself, and this through the spirit of faith and to give marks of your religious profession. — *Med.* 176.

2 It is not possible to subdue the passions and prevent the flesh from revolting, unless we resort to fasting and mortification; these are the means used by the saints to attain this object. — *Med.* 179.

3. Mortification weakens the body and renders it less susceptible to temptation; you should therefore use this means every day as a shield against the attacks of the enemy. You will find no other than this, joined to prayer, as Our Lord Himself has taught us in the Gospel. — *Med.* 179.

4. An austere and penitent life is the guar-

dian of chastity and disposes the soul for the friendship of God ; for, disengaging the soul from the body and gross pleasures, it renders it capable of applying itself to God and receiving His light ; it even banishes from it the obstacles which might hinder it from possessing the spirit of God. — *Med.* 80.

5. The more the body is humbled and mortified, the more the soul is purified, and the more agreeable it becomes to God and capable of acquiring the perfection suitable to it. — *Med.* 59.

6. You know that we advance in virtue only inasmuch as we do violence to ourselves ; be careful therefore to do it ; apply yourself much to mortification of the mind and senses, which is for you an obligation of state. — *Letters.*

7. We cannot advance in virtue but inasmuch as we are mortified. — *Med.* 95.

8. In order to become a saint, you must apply yourself much to mortification. — *Letters.*

9. Not having the happiness nor even the occasion of suffering martyrdom for the faith, make yourself a martyr for the love of God by the exercise of mortification. — *Med.* 89.

10. Adore Our Lord Jesus Christ in His state of victim. Let your principal care be to penetrate yourself through Him with the penitential spirit ; often ask Him to give you the heart and dispositions of a true penitent ;

be filled with the strength and virtue of these practices. — *Collection.*

11. It is necessary, as St. Paul says, that *though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inner man is renewed day by day*; ¹ that you become like the angels, and that, like them, according to the expression of the same Apostle, you do not consider things visible, but the invisible; because the visible are temporal and merely passing, whereas the invisible, being eternal, shall be the object of our affections for eternity. — *Med.* 25.

II. MORTIFICATION OF THE SENSES.

1. The senses being the portals through which sin usually enters the soul, the saints were most careful to curb them, so that they might not so easily fall into sin. — *Collection.*

2. You must so carefully watch over your senses that, in their use, you will *from all appearance of evil refrain yourselves*, ² according to the advice of St. Paul. — *Collection.*

3. What should induce you to mortify your senses is, that the more you mortify them, the more, also, will you enjoy interior peace and the presence of God. — *Collection.*

4. If we detach ourselves altogether from

1. II Cor. IV. 16.

2. I Thess. V. 27.

our senses, we shall lead a heavenly life on earth. — *Med.* 156.

5. If you wish to possess purity such as your state requires, watch so well over your senses, that, if possible, you will never relinquish controlling them. This is one of the principal ways of mortifying yourself, and one of the most suitable to your vocation. — *Med.* 101.

6. Unless you apply yourself to the mortification of your mind and senses, you will soon fall from virtue. — *Letters.*

7. Offer to God occasionally an act of mortification of some of your senses, which, making you insensibly die to yourself, will be an almost continual sacrifice which you may offer to Him in homage, and which will rise like an agreeable odour of sweet incense in His sight. — *Collection.*

8. Pray to the Most Blessed Virgin to obtain for you this favour, that your body, participating in the life of your soul by mortification of your senses, may no longer relish anything earthly, but live, so to speak, as if it were in heaven. — *Med.* 156.

9. I pray that you may become very holy ; for this purpose, you must apply yourself much to mortification. — *Letters.*

III. MORTIFICATION OF THE MIND.

1. If you allow your mind to become unrestrained and heedless, you will not be able to

apply yourself properly to mental prayer and other spiritual exercises ; you will become so distracted as to lose all facility for interior recollection. Yet this recollection is very necessary, if you would control your passions and prevent them from obtaining the mastery on the many occasions that will present themselves in the exercise of your employment. — *Collection.*

2. Always keep your mind under control ; for this purpose, strive as much as possible to dwell on some good thought which will occupy it and prevent distraction. — *Collection.*

3. Control your mind that it may always be prepared to receive the interior light with which God wishes to favour it, and, in keeping with this light, be wisely guided in all its operations. — *Collection.*

4. Be careful never to apply your mind to anything through curiosity, nor to let intellectual gratification be your aim ; but, apply it only to those things which besit your profession. — *Collection.*

5. Often remember that the first object God had in view in giving you intelligence was that you might frequently think of Him ; hence, one of your principal cares should be to disengage it as much as possible from creatures, with the view that it is an outrage offered to God to think of them without necessity, and thus without order. — *Collection.*

6. Crush your desires, I pray you, when they only tend to satisfy you ; have no other than to please God ; it is for this you are in the world and in your state. — *Letters.*

7. If you wish to become interior, it is of great consequence for you to mortify your mind and your eyes ; without these two sorts of mortification it is impossible to advance much in virtue. — *Letters.*

IV. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AS A PENITENT.

St. John Baptist De La Salle wished to become conformable to Jesus suffering by the practice of the most austere penance ; so we find him taking the resolution of not ceasing to torment his body as long as he should live. All that is most terrible, most sensible and most bitter in mortification did not suffice to quench his thirst for suffering. Not believing that he could ever well resemble his divine Model, he exercised himself in new tortures every day.

As if the blood in his veins were a burden, he seemed to wish to drain it out by cruel disciplines, which remained coloured as if they had been dipped in blood. As if he wished to renew in himself every day the scourging of Our Lord, there was no part of his body which had not reason to complain of the force and rigour of his arm, and which did not bear its marks. Bruised sometimes from head to foot, he left to no member the trouble of envying the other ; the pain was universal.

He usually wore a hair-shirt, and often thus enveloped, and with a pricking iron cincture, he made his journeys afoot, now bearing all the weight of the day and the heat of summer, and again the severity of rigorous winters.

St. John Baptist De La Salle was not less vigilant to mortify his own mind. Whatever esteem he had

for austerities, whatever his attraction for penitential practices, he made no account of them unless they were associated with interior mortification : and this made him often say : *I prefer one ounce of mortification of the mind to a pound of exterior penance.*

He made it a law for himself to practise mortification of the judgment. Here is what he said in the regulation he had drawn up for himself : *A thing to which I must become most attached is to renounce my own judgment and light, not following them in anything that concerns myself.* He practised this resolution with as much fidelity as if he had made a vow to do so. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXIV.



XLVIII

PERFECTION

I. THE OBLIGATION OF TENDING TO PERFECTION

1. If you have not more virtue than people of the world, you will be more guilty than they on the day of judgment. — *Med.* 58.

2. You, who have given yourself to God, and who, consequently, should consecrate to Him all the time of your life, should also do everything through the spirit of religion, and not acquit yourself of what is exterior only in the duties of your state; because, if men content themselves of with what is apparent in their actions, God, who searches hearts, will take no account of them. — *Med.* 58.

3. What God requires of you and in what respect He requires your justice to exceed that of people of the world, is that you not only keep the commandments, but that you also keep the counsels faithfully, and consequently, your Rules. — *Med.* 58.

4. Examine yourself well to see whether, in divesting yourself of your wordly dress, you have also laid aside the livery of the world, by renouncing all its false maxims; if, in cloth-

ing yourself with a new habit, you also renewed yourself in spirit, and if you entirely renounced the practices of the world ; as your life, as well as your habit, should be entirely different from theirs. — *Med.* 60.

5. In order to give ourselves to God, it is not sufficient to have abandoned all exterior things ; it is also necessary to perfect ourselves within and to renounce our passions and inclinations. — *Med.* 97.

6. Is it not to be feared that we have less virtue than the primitive Christians ? They lived in the world with more detachment and perfection than some religious who, however, are in retirement, and obliged by their profession to renounce the world. — *Med.* 116.

7. Do you correspond with the designs of God on you, and are you endeavouring in your state to attain such holiness as to be able to impart the same to those who are entrusted to your care ? — *Med.* 131.

8. Ask of God to lead you to heaven by the road which He Himself has marked out for you, and to make you attain the perfection of your state ; since it is He who has placed you therein, and who, therefore, wished, and still wishes, that you take therein the means of sanctifying yourself. — *Med.* 3.

II. MEANS OF ACQUIRING PERFECTION.

1. First means : *Shunning* of the least sins : of the least thing displeasing to God : of the pleasures of the senses : of the solicitations of nature : of human conversation : of useless words : of intellectual gratification : of sensible consolations in spiritual exercises.

Renouncement of our own will : of our own judgment.

Second means : *Fidelity* to the Rules : to the least community practices : to obedience : to inspirations and interior movements ; to filial confidence in our superior or director.

Third means : *Application* to the presence of God : to have views of faith in our actions ; to mental prayer during the prescribed time : to collect our thoughts frequently in order to take views of faith.

The means of facilitating this application are : modesty, reserve, exterior moderation, interior recollection, exterior retirement, interior retirement. — *Collection*.

2. We must never wilfully do the least thing displeasing to God : for, would it not be a great loss to be deprived of even one of God's graces through any imperfection ? — *Collection*.

3. A soul that is given to God should live and be animated by His spirit. Now, an imperfection prevents the infusion of the spirit of God, just as a pebble obstructs the free passage of water in a pipe or canal. — *Collection*.

4. You have in your state many means to practise virtue and piety ; you have the advantage of frequently making meditation and being able to make it well. Do you employ all these means which God gives you to save yourself and to acquire the perfection of your state ? If you are not faithful to do so, you deserve that God should punish you severely for such negligence. — *Med.* 133.

5. Flight from the world, regularity and the practice of silence are inestimable advantages, and the best means you can employ to give yourself to God. The more regular you are, the more will you acquire the perfection of your state ; the fewer dealings you will have with men, the more will God communicate Himself to you. — *Med.* 111.

6. Nothing renders a religious more solid and firm in his vocation than regularity, because of the respect and love which it produces for all the observances of the religious life, which are the sure means of obtaining fully the spirit of his state, and of persevering therein. — *Med.* 12.

7. It is not sufficient to have the thought of drawing near to God as perfectly as possible ; it is necessary to do so ; and it is done only inasmuch as we do violence to ourselves. — *Letters.*

8. Affection for your exercises, fidelity to acquit yourself of them and to enter into all the

practices of the community will especially help you to acquire the holiness and perfection that God wishes you to have. — *Med.* 39.

9. Make no distinction between the particular duties of your state and those which refer to your salvation and perfection. Be convinced that you will never effect your salvation more assuredly and that you will never acquire greater perfection than by well fulfilling the duties of your state, provided you do so with the view of doing the will of God. — *Collection.*

III. THE OBSTACLES TO PERFECTION.

1. Does not grace urge you to live up to the perfection of your state? Have you not from time to time strong inspirations to do violence to yourself in order to practise some considerable act of virtue? Do you not find it hard to be faithful? Do you not sometimes even resist grace? — *Med.* 121.

2. If, because you wish to do well, you were made to suffer all sorts of abuse and contempt, would you be prepared to suffer them with patience? It is on such occasions that it is seen whether virtue is solid. — *Med.* 118.

3. Sometimes the difficulty of advancing in perfection arises from some sin we have committed; we must humble ourselves before God and deplore our misery; for this is usually

what Our Lord awaits in order to do good to a diseased soul, and in order to repair what human infirmity has made it lose. Watch over yourself therefore, that your faults may not cause God to withdraw His graces. — *Med.* 71.

4. It sometimes happens that the servants of God find themselves in a sort of powerlessness to do good, either on account of the temptations which they can hardly resist, or because of interior pains, or the force of their passions. They do not then find it easy to draw near to God, either from want of light or from want of help on the part of those who conduct them. Sometimes this sort of pain lasts a long time. God leaves a soul in this condition to make it feel that it cannot do anything without Him ; that it cannot have the necessary impulse to draw near to Him without the help of grace ; and that, on the contrary, it can do everything if He strengthen it. — *Med.* 71.

IV. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE A MODEL OF PERFECTION.

St. John Baptist De La Salle was an accomplished model of perfection for his Brothers. Left to himself after resigning his office as Superior, and relieved of all care, his sanctification became his sole employment. Each of his actions became an example of virtue. Humble, submissive, obedient and simple, he arrived at that happy state of spiritual childhood which Our Lord Himself commends. All the goods of this world were nothing to him. He could not be busy but with God, as nothing could divert his mind from Him.

His perfection being his only work, he laboured at it without relaxation, without allowing the least occasion of augmenting it escape him. — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. III. Chap. XVI.

In order to be pleased with St. John Baptist De La Salle, it was necessary to be in earnest about one's perfection, to be determined to renounce one's self and to undertake the work of perfectly dying to one's self. Those in whom he found courage to labour for their perfection were his friends. He urged them to run in this thorny road. He pardoned nothing to these generous souls, because he wished to accustom them not to pardon themselves anything, and to teach them to foment an irreconcilable hatred between the spirit and the flesh. — *Life*, by Guibert.



XLIX

PERSECUTIONS

I. FAITH SHOWS US THE ADVANTAGES OF PERSECUTIONS AND SUFFERINGS.

1. When you are afflicted, unite yourself, as one of His members, to Jesus Christ suffering, and love His cross : this union and love will alleviate your sufferings and render them more tolerable. — *Med.* 165.

2. The more you cherish persecution and humiliations, the more will you touch the hearts of those whom you instruct, and succeed in making them live as true Christians. — *Med.* 79.

3. Affronts can hurt only those who do not suffer them for God. Persecutions sanctified by patience, and accepted with joy and love, become dear and precious, and are the richest jewels of the crown of glory : they who would humiliate you most are those who labour most to enrich it. — *Letters.*

4. You will never accomplish anything which may contribute to your salvation and to that of your neighbour, which the world will not oppose. Suffer its contradictions with courage.

and remain firm in the practice of good, notwithstanding the obstacles you may meet with. God will bless everything you will do with zeal and love of Him, and you will be victorious over those who oppose themselves to what you undertake for His glory. — *Med.* 182.

5. It is the reward of apostolic men in this world to be persecuted and to die for the defence and support of the faith which they have announced. Our Lord says: *The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is the apostle greater than he that sent him.*¹ *If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*² — *Med.* 175.

6. If you discharge your ministry faithfully, and if you successfully labour for the salvation of the souls confided to you, persecution, whether on the part of the devil or the world, will always be your portion. — *Med.* 182.

7. Be prepared to suffer insults, outrages and calumnies for all the good that you have endeavoured to do to your neighbour; this is the principal reward that God promises in this world, and often the only one received from the poor for all the good we do them. Prepare yourself always to receive this kind of reward with affection. — *Med.* 120.

8. All the gratitude that we must expect for having instructed the children, and

1. John. XIII. 16.

2. John. XV. 20.

especially the poor, is insults, outrages and calumnies, and even persecution unto death. This is the reward of the saints and of apostolic men, as it was that of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not expect any other if you have God in view in the ministry which He has confided to you. It is even this which should induce you to employ yourself therein with more affection, and which will give you the means of producing more fruit ; for the more faithful you are to God when suffering, the more will He lavish His graces and blessings on you in the exercise of your ministry. — *Med.* 155.

9. How happy are they who have the advantage of suffering and dying for having laboured to gain souls to God ! This is what you must expect for your reward for the cares and labours of your ministry. Is this the reward you hope for in your employment ? Do you wish to suffer much, to be cruelly persecuted, finally to die at your work, after having laboured with all your might at the destruction of sin ? — *Med.* 162.

10. The more they who labour for the extension of the reign of Jesus Christ suffer in their apostolic work, the more conversions does God work by their means, and the more efficaciously do they work for the salvation of souls. — *Med.* 126.

11. Do not be astonished if you meet with

trouble and contradiction in the exercise of your employment ; the more you suffer therein, the more you should endeavour to acquit yourself of it well, being convinced that God will then shower down His blessings in abundance on your labours. — *Med.* 126.

12. Do the trials, sufferings and persecutions that you meet with in your ministry, instead of breaking down your courage, serve to increase your zeal, and to stimulate you the more to cause Jesus Christ to be known and loved ? — *Med.* 175.

13. Zeal cannot be more sure or more solid than when it continues to exercise itself in the midst of the greatest sufferings and the most cruel persecutions. — *Med.* 140.

14. They who, by their irreproachable life and their holy doctrine, uphold the Gospel and religion, soon suffer great persecution ; the devil not being able to support their progress in virtue and the fruit which they produce in souls, does not cease to torment them himself or by his imps. St. Paul tells us that *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.*¹ Such is to be your lot as long as you are in this world. — *Med.* 100.

15. Do not expect any other reward when you have acquitted yourself well of the duties of your employment, than to suffer persecution,

insults, outrages and maledictions, and to hear yourself falsely accused of all sorts of evil doing. Enter into the spirit of these words of Jesus Christ: *Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you*¹. Rest assured that such persecutions will draw abundant graces on you, and God's blessing on your employment. — *Med.* 167.

16. Esteem yourself happy and well rewarded when you are overwhelmed with opprobrium and suffer all sorts of outrages for the love of Jesus Christ. If it be a pleasure for libertines to make you suffer, let it also be a great satisfaction for you to bear up with it because it helps you to die to yourself.— *Med.* 145.

17. Jesus Christ foretold His Apostles what they would have to suffer from the Jews, who *would put them out of the synagogues*² and assemblies, looking on them as excommunicated and unworthy to converse with them. It is thus that people of the world look upon those who belong to God, especially those who have withdrawn from the world, and whom they molest, insult, outrage, maltreat as malefactors, because, according to Our Lord, they *are not of the world*.³ It is thus that you must expect to be treated as long as you live according to the spirit of your Institute, and

1. Matt. V. 12.

2. Matt. XVI. 2.

3. John. XV. 19.

labour usefully for your neighbour; because, as the devil will hate you, the world which is closely allied with him, will not be able to suffer you either. — *Med.* 41.

II. THE JOY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE IN THE MIDST OF AFFRONTS.

The most unfortunate accidents, the most painful disgraces, such as the loss of goods, the death of most fervent disciples, the most painful sickness and ills that afflicted his body, the judgments that blighted his honour, calumnies, injustice, insults, affronts and all sorts of bad treatment always found him ready to receive them with joy, in the thought that he was fortunate in having a part in the cross of Jesus Christ and in drinking of His chalice. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXIV.

III. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE SHARES THE HUMILIATIONS OF HIS DISCIPLES.

The Brothers were made to suffer more from insults than from want of money. In the first years especially, their patience was subjected to the most severe trials. The people in the streets, astonished at the singularity of their costume, subjected them to a thousand insults; their humble mien only emboldened the populace, that felt itself free to insult them with impunity. However, their virtue did not lack admirers; for, one day when the Brothers were being insulted in the streets, a priest approached them and said: "What happiness is yours if you know how to appreciate it, and much I would desire it, if I had enough grace to bear it! You are overwhelmed with opprobrium, but if such contempt pleases you, you are not to be pitied. For as St. Peter says: *But if also you suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye.*" — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXIV.



L

PERSEVERANCE

I THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSEVERANCE.

1. Act in such a way that your principal virtues be firmness of purpose and fidelity in well-doing, and especially with regard to your Rules and exercises; and be careful not to relax in anything in this connection; often pray for this firmness and fidelity which are necessary to obtain the gift of perseverance, and in order not to fall into the misfortunes of those of whom it is said in Holy Scripture : *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.* ¹ — *Collection.*

2. The Brothers shall converse during recreation on the advantage and probable assurance of their salvation of those who live in the Society, and who have the happiness of being bound to it by vows and of observing the Rules. — *Collection.*

3. In withdrawing from the world, you consecrated yourselves to God to live in com-

munity entirely disengaged from everything capable of satisfying the senses, and there to fix your abode. You should consider that day as the one on which your happiness on earth began, which happiness is to be one day consummated in heaven. — *Med.* 191.

4. Your sanctification is the principal end you should have had in view when you entered this community, and the one which should keep you there; it is for this reason that we are there withdrawn from the world and oblige ourselves to all sorts of exercises of piety. How foolish to have come for any other end! — *Med.* 100.

5. Convince yourself that it is very important for your salvation to be faithful in your state, and that this fidelity consists in not failing in anything that God requires of you, as you will have to render an account to God of even the least circumstances. — *Collection.*

6. Do not discriminate between the particular duties of your state and those which refer to your salvation and perfection. Be convinced that you will never effect your salvation more assuredly, and that you will never acquire greater perfection than by well fulfilling the duties of your state, provided you do so with the view of doing the will of God. — *Collection.*

7. What folly to wish to be honoured with the saints and not to live like them; to have

only worldly thoughts ; not to know how to distinguish the precious from the vile, to the extent of seeking for the pleasures and honours of this world ! — *Med.* 184.

8. Let us raise our thoughts to heaven, and let the lot of the saints serve as a motive for enkindling and increasing in us the spirit of martyrdom, contempt of the world and an ardent love for Our Lord Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 184.

II. MEANS OF PERSEVERANCE.

1. The principal fruit that obedience produces in a religious person, is that it procures for him the perfection of his state, strengthens him in it and makes him persevere in it. Moreover, nothing renders a religious more solid and more firm in his vocation than this virtue, because of the respect and love which it gives him for all observances of religion, which are the assured ways of fully possessing the spirit of one's state and of persevering therein. And, in fact, whence do defections arise ? Is it not because one has no longer any love for the Rules and practices of the community, that one then becomes disgusted with them and that finally they are observed only with difficulty ? — *Med.* 12.

2. Rest assured that you will love your state and that you will have its spirit, only inasmuch as you are faithful to obedience. — *Med.* 12.

3. Do you esteem the state in which God has placed you? Do you believe yourself very happy to be in it, and do you prefer it to everything that you might have or desire in this world? You are not worthy of so holy a state unless you are in this disposition. If you do not feel it in you, at least pray for it, and endeavour, with the help of God's grace, to strengthen yourself well in it. — *Med.* 109.

4. Let us strive to merit perseverance in our religious life; for this purpose, let us be faithful to the least practices of the community and to the smallest points of regularity. — *Med.* 89.

5. You who have withdrawn from the world, should be altogether disengaged from all human inclinations, which only drag you down to earth; you should tend only to heaven, to which you ought always to raise your mind and heart; because you are made only for heaven, because you should labour only for heaven, and because you will find perfect repose only in heaven. — *Med.* 40.

6. If you wish to persevere and die in your vocation, never have any intercourse with the people of the world; for, little by little, you will acquire a taste for their habits and be drawn into conversation with them to such an extent, that you will no longer be able, through policy, to refrain from applauding their language, however pernicious it may be; this

will lead you into unfaithfulness, and being no longer faithful to your Rules, you will grow disgusted with your vocation and finally abandon it. — *Last recommendations.*

III. THOUGHTS TENDING TO ENCOURAGE US TO PERSEVERANCE.

1. Not having the happiness nor the opportunity to suffer martyrdom for the faith, make yourself a martyr for the love of God by the exercise of mortification. “The life of a Christian,” say St. Gregory, “should be a continual martyrdom; because he is a Christian only to be conformable to Jesus Christ, who suffered all His lifetime.” This martyrdom is often harder than that of shedding one’s blood, because it is incomparably longer, and consequently more difficult to undergo. Encourage yourself thereto, consequently, by the example of the saints, and especially that of Our Lord. — *Med.* 89.

2. They who wish to consecrate themselves to God from youth, must not be discouraged by the pains and difficulties they meet with, either in carrying out their pious design or in persevering in the path of virtue after having entered it. — *Med.* 115.

3. All that you have to endeavour to do now is not to examine your vocation, but to correspond faithfully with it. You should not have entered this state without being prepared to

suffer ; this being the case, you will not be disappointed when you do suffer. Offer yourself daily to God with what you have to suffer, so that He may dispose of you according to His good pleasure. — *Letters.*

4. I am praying that God may bless you, so that you may not be inconstant, now wishing one thing, now another. When we give ourselves to God, we must be more constant and seek only Him ; inconstancy is a sign that we often follow our own whims. May God give you the spirit of your state. — *Letters.*

5. At your death, those whom you have conducted to heaven, as if by the hand, will unite their voices to obtain a favourable judgment for you from Our Lord, beseeching Him not to delay putting you in possession of a happiness which, by your labours and care, you have helped them to attain. — *Med.* 208.

6. Oh ! what joy will not a Brother of the Christian Schools have, when he sees a large number of his pupils in possession of eternal happiness for which they will be indebted to him through the grace of Jesus Christ ! How mutual then the joy of the teacher and that of his disciples ! What union in God will there not then be between them ! It will be a great happiness for them to converse about the blessings that their vocation made them hope for, and the riches of the glorious heritage of God in the abode of

the saints. Place yourself therefore in such a state, by exactitude to your duties, that you may be placed in possession of so great a happiness immediately after your death. — *Med.* 208.

IV. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE ENCOURAGES
THE BROTHERS TO PERSEVERE IN THEIR HOLY VOCATION.

What did he not do to encourage those of his Brothers whom he saw in trouble or tempted to abandon their state ! He spared no pains ; he wrote them letters full of tenderness, and showed them the harm they would do themselves by abandoning their vocation because of some difficulty. When this did not suffice to dissuade them, he immediately set out to endeavour, by his presence, to bring about the conversion which he had failed to effect by his letters. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XVI.



PIETY

I. THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF PIETY.

1. Your community may be very useful to the Church ; but rest assured that it will be so only on condition that it will be based on piety and humility, because it is these two foundations that will render it immovable. — *Med.* 161.

2. If you are endeavouring to increase your faith, let it be for the purpose of increasing your piety. — *Med.* 175.

3. Oh ! how solid piety is when it is founded on virtue, and how true and sure virtue is when it is accompanied by piety ! — *Med.* 133.

4. You should endeavour to acquire a piety suitable to your state by watchfulness over yourself, and by your good works and prayers. — *Med.* 174.

5. Act in such a way that, by interior application to your exercises, piety become so rooted in you as to become unchangeable. — *Med.* 180.

6. Rest assured that you will not acquire solid piety except by mortification of the mind and senses. — *Med.* 123.

7. Rest assured that as long as you have solid piety and keep away from the world, libertines and worldlings will be against you. But do not doubt that God will take up your cause and be your defender. — *Med.* 120.

8. Exercise yourself in piety, after the example of the saints; for, as St. Paul says: *Godliness is profitable to all things*,¹ and it is to it that the goods of this world, as well as those of the world to come, have been promised. Act therefore to procure them by this means, which is very certain, and without which you cannot attain to real goods, which alone should be the object and end of all your desires. — *Med.* 190.

9. Act in such a way that piety may be the portion of your pupils as well as your own. The world will persecute you, but God Himself will be your defender. — *Med.* 136.

10. Rest assured that you will not preserve your piety nor procure it for your disciples but inasmuch as you fully possess two things: horror of sin, and the spirit of religion; without which your soul, like a city without walls and fortifications, would always be at the mercy of its enemies. — *Med.* 160.

11. Oh! how true it is, as St. Paul tells us, that: *Godliness is profitable to all things*,² and that it produces great good, not only in

1. 1 Tim. IV. 8.

2. 1 Tim. IV. 8.

those who possess it in such a way that everything in them preaches virtue, but also in those who see them, converse with them, and receive their instructions ! — *Med.* 98.

12. May it be said of you, who should communicate piety to the children confided to you, that you inspire them with it by your exterior and your conduct ? Does it suffice for them to see you to feel inclined to conduct themselves well, and does your sole presence induce them to be virtuous ? Does everything you say produce in them the spirit of piety and religion ? This is the principal good you should do them, and it is the best thing you can give them when they leave you. — *Med.* 98.

II. THE PIETY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

The spirit of religion which is inseparable from that of faith, of which it is the sign and effect, concurred with it to make St. John Baptist De La Salle respectful in the places and exercises consecrated to God. There was no one of his time who endeavoured more to render to the divine Majesty and to holy things, both interiorly and exteriorly, the veneration and worship due them.

In the most remote parts of France where he went to hide himself, his piety betrayed and revealed him when he was in church : because he did not believe himself dispensed from showing signs thereof. The people could not tire looking at this unknown priest who showed the devotion of a saint and the modesty of an angel, in the house of God.

He had so well succeeded in inspiring his disciples with the respect and religious awe with which he was seized in the temple of the Lord, that they themselves

imbued therewith their scholars and those who saw both in church. It was this modesty and piety of teachers and pupils which, striking the parish priest of Calais, brought about the establishment of the schools in that city.

People often stopped in the streets of Paris and elsewhere to admire hundreds of children, of themselves, indocile, unmanageable, thoughtless and giddy, going two by two and in an orderly manner to Mass, entering the house of God and there keeping silence, and with a modesty and piety which people did not cease to admire until they looked at those who were at their head. How often, following the example of their father, did not these simple Brothers preach in church, following the example of St. Francis, without saying a word, by their recollected, respectful and religious exterior! — *Spirit and Virtues*
Chap. III.





LII

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

I. THE HAPPINESS PRODUCED BY THE HABITUAL PRESENCE OF GOD.

1. It happens to some souls who are interiorly free and even detached from affection to created things, that God grants them the great grace of rarely, and even never, losing the grace of God; this is for them an anticipated happiness and foretaste of heaven. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

2. How happy I should consider myself, O my God, when I reflect that I am Thy temple, and that Thou Thyself dost tell me that I have this advantage. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

3. We are happy in this world only inasmuch as we think of God and love Him. It appears that your love for God is very feeble; I am not surprised, when you tell me that you rarely think of God. How can you expect it to be otherwise? — *Letters.*

4. The principal occupation in mental prayer of the soul that is really interior, is to fill itself

with God and to unite itself interiorly to Him ; this is for it, through a lively faith, a sort of apprenticeship and foretaste of what it is really to do during all eternity. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

5. It is necessary that you should nourish your soul by occupying yourself as much as possible with the presence of God. What constitutes the life of the saints, is continual attention to the holy presence of God ; it should also be that of persons consecrated to God, and who seek only to do His holy will, to love Him and to cause Him to be loved by others. It is this which should constitute your occupation on earth ; all your labours should tend to this end. — *Med.* 67.

6. There is nothing that we should more carefully endeavour to attain than habitual attention to the presence of God ; because, even in this life, it is an anticipated happiness of heaven. — *Med.* 179.

7. How happy, O my God, I am to have Thee always present, wherever I may go, or wherever I may be ! If my senses have a distate for any place, can my mind be dissatisfied, since, as Thou art in such a place, it can always think of Thee ? It is a kind of anticipated happiness of heaven to be able to be always with Thee and to think always of Thee. Grant me this grace, I beseech Thee, O my God, and do not permit me to do anything displeasing to

Thee ; because, without Thee, I cannot do any good ; grant that even my mind may be so recollected and attentive to Thee, that nothing exterior may be able to distract it. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

II. THE FRUITS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

1. The manner of placing ourselves in the presence of God by considering Him in the place in which we are, may produce in us three principal fruits.

The first is to keep us easily recollected and attentive to the presence of God, either when walking or stopping in any place, even where there is most occasion for distraction.

The second is to prevent us from offending God when we are tempted, or when we have the occasion of falling into sin ; for, if we would be ashamed to say or do anything displeasing to a person for whom we had consideration, with how much greater reason should we fear to offend in His presence God, who is so good to us and who loves us so much.

The third fruit is to give us confidence in God ; because attention to His holy presence in the place where we are, will strengthen us against temptations and deliver us from them. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

2. We should apply ourselves to the holy presence of God : 1. Because it is the means of banishing from the mind all bad and useless

thoughts, or of preventing them from making any impression on us ; 2. Because it is the soul and support of the interior life ; 3. Because spiritual exercises have very little vigour, if they are not animated with the presence of God. — *Collection.*

3. Application to the presence of God has this advantage, that in proportion as it occupies the mind, in the same proportion does it banish application to creatures. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

4. Habitual attention to the adorable presence of God is very useful to you in your employment ; because, since it has reference to God and tends to win souls for Him, it is very important not to lose sight of Him ; therefore, be as faithful thereto as possible. — *Med.* 179.

5. The more a soul thinks of God, the less will it be taken up with and love creatures. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

III. PRACTICAL MEANS OF ACQUIRING THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

1. The Brothers shall pay as much attention as they can to the holy presence of God, and shall take care to renew it from time to time, being well convinced that they should think only of Him and of what He ordains, that is, of what relates to their duty and employment. They shall banish from their minds all vain ideas and thoughts that might withdraw them from

these practices, which are very important for them, and without which they can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of the Institute. — *Rules*, Chap. II.

2. Endeavour to keep the holy presence of God, my very dear Brother; consider its practice as your sovereign happiness. Recollection and attention to yourself should, therefore, be great enough to secure it for you. It will be the means of overcoming yourself, when the occasion presents itself, and of preventing you from doing your actions naturally, helping you always to have the will of God in view, which is the only thing at which you should aim. — *Letters*.

3. The first thing we should do in mental prayer, is to penetrate ourselves with the presence of God, which should be done through a sentiment of faith founded on a passage of Holy Scripture. — *Method of Mental Prayer*.

4. When we apply ourselves to the presence of God in mental prayer, it is important that the reflections we make should all relate to the same manner of applying ourselves thereto and tend to the same end; for this practice, not only tends to set the mind aright and helps it to reason, but is also of much help to the soul to keep recollected, and gives it facility to perceive the presence of God longer and more intimately. — *Method of Mental Prayer*.

5. When the soul is sufficiently purified and

detached from the least sins to enter directly into the disposition of simple attention to the presence of God, it makes its way, in the practice of mental prayer and of facility in occupying itself with the presence of God, much shorter, and disposes of many difficulties. But it is necessary that the soul that wishes to pursue this course without delay, should very carefully watch over itself, to disengage itself even from all natural attachments; because God grants this grace only to souls that are very pure and that He wishes Himself to purify by this way, through His special favour. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

6. Often renew during Holy Mass the thought of the presence of God and of the respect which the Angels have in the presence of the divine Majesty. — *Collection.*

IV. RESPECT OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

St. John Baptist De La Salle was everywhere seen with an air of devotion which revealed an interior in which the Holy Ghost resided, and where he kept all the faculties of his soul in the exercise of adoration, love and annihilation and of other sentiments of religion.

It often happened that he raised to heaven his eyes, so full of devotion and so animated with heavenly fire that those who observed him felt the sparks fall back into their own hearts and enkindle therein piety and the love of God.

As the presence of God kept him in respect everywhere, and made the most profound impressions on

his mind and heart, he believed that others were not less sensitive to it. Hence, he was in the habit of saying to them when they deviated from their duty : " Have you not the fear of God and are you not aware that **He beholds you ?** "

This habit of keeping his mind constantly filled with the thought of God made it almost impossible for him to speak of anything but his divine Master. Every other topic was irksome to him, and his silence or his affected coldness showed his pain, when civility would not permit him to change the subject of conversation.

Even in his sleep he was occupied with God, and he would sometimes be heard to say : *My God, Thou knowest that I wish but Thee.* — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. IX.





LIII

PRAYER

I. THE NEED WE HAVE OF PRAYER.

1. *Ask and you shall receive.* Our Lord wishes to teach us by these words of the Gospel, that, as we are in need of graces, we should ask them of Him, and that, as God wishes to give them to us, He has given us a sure means of obtaining them. This means is prayer, and it is so much the easier because He is present everywhere, and we can employ this means whenever we wish. — *Med.* 36.

2. When you find it hard to practise virtue, you must act in such a way as to make it easy by having recourse to prayer, and that promptly, remembering these words of Our Lord: *Ask and you shall receive.*¹ — *Med.* 36.

3. We are so subject to temptation that Job says: *The life of man on earth is a warfare,*² and St. Peter adds: *The devil as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour;*³

1. John. XVI. 24.

2. Job. VII. 1.

3. I Peter. V. 8.

now, it is prayer that enables us to resist him.
— *Med.* 36.

4. Our Lord says of the impure spirit, that *this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.*¹ He places prayer before fasting, in order to show us that, although mortification is necessary in order to overcome this impure spirit, it is still more important to be armed with prayer when we are attacked. — *Med.* 36.

5. You must be much given to prayer in your ministry. Unceasingly lay before God the wants of your pupils, and the difficulties you meet with in educating them. Our Lord, seeing that you acknowledge Him in your employment as almighty, and that you look on yourself as an instrument that should not have any movement except by Him, will not fail to grant you what you ask of Him. — *Med.* 196.

II. WHAT ABOVE ALL THINGS WE SHOULD ASK FOR IN PRAYER.

1. It is your duty to be assiduous in prayer and to love it, in order to draw down on yourself a great number of graces that you need in your state, both for your own sanctification and for that of others. — *Med.* 95.

2. You should have such horror of everything that approaches sin, that, according to St. Paul, you should abstain even from what

1. Matt. XVII. 20.

has the shadow or appearance of sin. But as this is an advantage that you cannot have of yourself, it is necessary that you continually implore the help of God for this purpose. — *Med. 39.*

3. Pray to God without ceasing that nothing may make you displeasing in His sight; because you are obliged to instil His love into the hearts of those whom you instruct. Do you act in this manner? Is this what you ask of God in the prayers that you say? — *Med. 39.*

4. Ask of God a pure heart that may be detached from and abhor, not only grievous sins, but, likewise, everything that may tarnish your conscience and render you disagreeable to His sovereign Majesty. — *Med. 36.*

5. Continually ask of God that it may please Him to increase your Institute, and to make it daily fructify more and more, so that, as St. Paul says, the hearts of the faithful may be strengthened in *justice and sanctification, and redemption.*¹ — *Med. 207.*

6. It is a sort of obligation for us to pray frequently for the souls that suffer in Purgatory. Enter into the spirit of the Church; unite yourself to that tender mother in all the prayers and sacrifices she offers to God for the relief of these souls. Implore for them the help of God with as much fervour and earnestness as

1. I Cor. I. 30.

possible, in order to have the honour of being worthy members of the Church and the co-operators of Jesus Christ in the redemption of these captive souls. — *Med.* 185.

III. THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER.

1. Apply yourself with attention and fervour to mental prayer, in order to be filled with grace from on high. Do not cease praying to God : often repeat these words with the Church : *Send forth Thy Spirit and give us a new life and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.* — *Med.* 42.

2. Have frequent recourse to God, and you will find that He will help you as much for regularity as for submission and stability of mind : all of which, you should strive to acquire and earnestly ask of God. — *Letters.*

3. Be ashamed to find yourself so slothful and negligent in praying to God, who wishes more to give than you do, to ask : He has more compassion for your miseries than you have desire to be delivered from them. Endeavour therefore to believe Him who urges you so strongly : render yourself worthy of His promises, and take pleasure in having recourse to Him. “ Who is there ”, says St. Augustine, “ that has had confidence of obtaining some favour from God, and has fallen into confusion ” ? — *Med.* 38.

4. Prayer has little efficacy unless it is sustained by mortification. — *Med.* 95.

5. Be especially careful to say your prayers piously, and that they be likewise so recited in school; because it is our attention to vocal prayers that renders them agreeable to God. — *Letters.*

6. Prayer and the privation of sensual pleasures are two very efficacious means of obtaining from God all the graces we need; hence, you are obliged to have recourse to them as often as possible, especially when you have anything to ask of God for those confided to you. You must be their intercessors with Him, in order to obtain piety for them by your prayers; all your other efforts being insufficient, for it belongs to God alone to give true wisdom, which is the Christian spirit. — *Med.* 157.

7. It is very important for you to teach your pupils how to pray as Our Lord taught His followers, and to pray with much piety and in private, that is, with much recollection, renouncing all thoughts that might distract their mind during this time, so that, being occupied only with God, they may easily obtain what they ask for. — *Med.* 202.

8. Let us apply ourselves to ejaculatory prayers, because they enkindle and keep alive the fire of the love of God, which, through the weakness of our mind and the languor of our heart, diminishes from time to time. — *Collection.*

IV. THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR PRAYER.

Prayer was his recourse in the junctures in which he stood in need of the light of the Holy Ghost. His prayers were always connected with God, and never did he undertake anything without previously having recourse to the sacraments, and consulting God to know His will and implore His assistance. Prayer was his only means of defence against his enemies. He was accustomed to repeat this maxim which was deeply engraven in his heart: It is necessary to pray much, in order to know the will of God and obtain His help.

The servant of God was such a friend of prayer that every place suited him to give himself up to it, even the streets of Paris. Without as well as within the house, in public places as well as at the feet of his crucifix, his exterior always indicated that he was recollected and thought only of God. The Rosary was his usual prayer when he walked through the streets of the city: and he wished that his disciples as well as himself, should make it their duty to pray everywhere, and, when on the streets, to have their Rosary in their hands, their eyes cast down and their hearts in heaven.

When he said the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin with his Novices, it was always like them, bareheaded, standing, without ever leaning against anything, modestly, attentively, devoutly, listening, showing by his air and in his whole exterior that he knew to whom he was speaking, and that he never forgot the remembrance that the sovereign Majesty requires: attention, appearing to cherish every expression of the Psalms, and entering into the various sentiments which they offer the soul and which the Holy Ghost produces in those who look upon themselves as His instruments: devoutly, taking singular pleasure therein, and never finding more joy than when he spoke to God or of God. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. VII.

PURITY OF INTENTION

I. THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF PURITY OF INTENTION.

1. The Brothers shall make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive ; but they shall so act as to perform them all by the guidance of God through the movement of His spirit, and with the intention of pleasing Him. — *Rules*, Chap. II.

2. As God has created us only for Himself. He does not wish us to be actuated by the consideration of any creature. Hence, any action performed for any created end, is looked upon by Almighty God, as doing Him a wrong, and He has no regard for any good which may be its apparent object. — *Med.* 75.

3 If you perform your actions to please men, you will have no other reward for them than that which men will give you, and which is necessarily very sordid and transitory. — *Med.* 75.

4. It is not sufficient to refrain from acting

with the view of pleasing men ; it must also be with the view of pleasing God ; and, as St. Paul says, in a manner worthy of God. — *Med.* 75.

5. If we really love God, we will act for Him alone in everything. St. Paul says : *Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.*¹ It should have been only for this end that you withdrew from the world, because it is God who should be the end of your actions, as it is He who is their principle. — *Med.* 98.

6. It should only be in compliance with the will of God, and in submission to His will, that you should labour for the salvation of souls ; this will be the means of sanctifying yourself in your employment and procuring the sanctification of others. — *Med.* 135.

7. In order to acquit yourself well of your ministry, you should not be actuated by any human views and not be troubled about anything but what may contribute to make you procure the salvation of the souls confided to you ; that is, do the good which is the end of your state and employment. Is it thus you act ? — *Med.* 107.

8. If you wish to render yourself worthy of being employed in saving souls, be detached from everything, and the graces of God will be poured down on you in abundance, both for yourself and for others. Say, as it is written

1. I Cor. X. 31.

in Genesis : *Give me the persons and the rest take to Thyself.*¹ that is. dispose of them as Thou pleasest ; for. with the exception of the holy love of God and the salvation of souls. all the rest should be indifferent to you. — *Med. 187.*

9. It is particularly to you that Our Lord addresses these words of the Gospel : *Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God.*² Indeed. you should not have come to this house. except to seek it : first. for yourself ; secondly. for those with whose instruction God has charged you. — *Med. 67.*

10. Your profession makes it your duty to teach children the science of salvation. and you are obliged to teach them with entire disinterestedness : do you do it with the sole view of procuring the glory of God and the salvation of your neighbour ? Protest to Our Lord that you will have no other intention than this. — *Med. 108.*

11. Be careful not to have any human views in the instructions given to your pupils. nor to glorify yourself in what you are doing : for these are two things capable of spoiling all the good there might be in the exercise of your ministry. — *Med. 196.*

12. Endeavour. in your employment. to have intentions as pure and disinterested as those

1. Gen. XIV. 21.

2. Matt. VI. 33.

of Our Lord Himself: by this means you will draw down the blessings and graces of God on yourself and your labours. — *Med.* 196.

13. Do you perform all your actions as being before God, belonging to God and having but to please God? — *Med.* 45.

14. Are you careful at the beginning of mental prayer to think of the actions of the day: of some that you find the most difficult: the occasions in which nature will have to suffer, so that you may prepare for them: the good actions you can perform and the faults you can avoid: the intention you should form in all your actions: the virtues you can practise in each of them: your employment or any like subject? — *Collection.*

THE PURITY OF INTENTION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

Pure love of God was the soul of the whole conduct of St. John Baptist De La Salle. God, the only object of his hopes, was the end of all his desires and intentions. To please Him, to do His holy will in all things, to procure His glory, to love Him and cause Him to be loved, were the sole ends he had in view. Satisfied with serving God for God, the honour of working for so good a Master, the happiness of pleasing Him appeared to him sufficient motives to set his whole heart quite aflame. Perfect charity had so taken possession of his heart that it left no entrance to human interests, to the attractions of creatures and the artifices of self-love. The good pleasure of God and His pure love were the sole motives of his actions.

In order to inspire his disciples with this pure love of God, he incessantly inculcated in them to seek God

alone in everything, to have Him alone in view, to act only for Him and to make Him the only end of their intentions as well as the sole object of their desires and thoughts. In order to make them continually attentive on this point, he was accustomed to say when he saw them commit the least fault: "Is it for God that you are doing this?" Himself doing everything for God and for Him alone, he induced the others to do the same thing, and thus rendered them attentive to ennoble their least actions, through the sole, pure motive of the glory of our divine Master and of the accomplishment of His holy will, never ceasing to repeat to them these words of St. Paul: *All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*¹

"Remember" he writes to a Brother, "that we are happy in this world only when we perform our actions in view of God, through love for Him and to please Him alone. It seems as if you were very weak; but I am not surprised, since you tell me that you rarely think of God; now, what means is there of advancing in the virtue of holy love, if we never think of Him who should be the object of our thoughts? Apply yourself to your exercises in such a manner that you may not have to say that, having begun by the spirit, you end by the flesh, that is, in a manner altogether natural. Mortification is required in order to do nothing but in view of God."

Finally, according to the testimony of a virtuous parish priest, who knew the servant of God well, his life was so perfect, that it may be said that he was no longer himself, that it was no longer he that lived, but that he acted in everything in God and for God.
— *Spirit and Virtues.*

1. I Colos. III. 17.



RECREATION

1. Take a short recreation every day after meals, so that you may afterwards resume your duties with greater affection and application. Look upon this relaxation as similar to that which Our Lord sometimes gave His Apostles, when He said to them : *Come apart and rest a little.* ¹ — *Collection.*

2. The fruit that we derive from holy conversations, is there to find Our Lord with us. Jesus is pleased with you when you take pleasure in speaking of what relates to Him and of what may lead to Him. When you willingly converse on pious subjects, Our Lord, being in the midst of you, will give Himself to you and communicate His spirit to you ; and, in proportion as you speak of what relates to Him, in the same proportion, also, will you learn to know Him, and, consequently, to relish what is good, and His holy maxims. — *Med. 30.*

3. The Brothers shall be careful not to extinguish the sacred fire enkindled in their hearts by the Holy Ghost during mental prayer and

the other holy exercises of the day, by conversing on topics which, tainted with the corruption of the age, would only distract their minds, withdraw them from God and tarnish the purity of their hearts. — *Collection*.

4. Take care to be cordial towards all, always to speak very kindly and deferentially, endeavouring to imitate the manner of speaking and answering of Our Lord. — *Letters*.

5. It is what relates to God and His service that should be the usual subject of conversation of those who have consecrated themselves to Him by leaving the world. It should, therefore, be one of the chief concerns of those who live in community, to learn and accustom themselves to speak of God, and to speak well of Him. — *Collection*.

6. As religious have withdrawn from the world, their conversation should likewise be altogether different from that of persons of the world; because it would be of little use for them to be separated in body from it, if they were not to take a spirit opposed to it; and it is especially in conversation that they should make this separation appear. — *Med. 30*.

7. Be not too eager and outspoken in recreation; beware of levity; do not lose the presence of God; avoid boisterous and excessive laughter and all other unbecoming behaviour; but act in a sedate and refined manner as becomes Christians, and especially persons withdrawn

from the world, and whose every action should be holy and edifying. — *Collection.*

8. Be careful to take Our Lord as your model in your conversations and recreations. Is it with the view to mutual edification that you assist at recreation? On leaving it are you, like the disciples going to Emmaus, enkindled with divine love, better instructed in your duties and more encouraged to acquit yourself of them? This is the true meaning of profiting by the moments that obedience grants you to rest from labour and recreate yourself. — *Med. 30.*

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE THE MODEL
OF RELIGIOUS IN RECREATION.

The discretion of St. John Baptist De La Salle in his conversation deserves special praise. He was so reserved in his discourse, so circumspect in what he said, so attentive to speak to the purpose, so exact to explain himself in few words, and so modest in his tone and in the manner of giving his advice, that it was very evident that he practised to the letter this maxim inspired by the saints, "of polishing all his expressions and not allowing himself to use any that he might afterwards regret having pronounced." Always prepared to listen and slow to speak, according to the advice of St. James, he measured his words so well that he was never heard to utter a single one that was superfluous, useless, light or indiscreet.

Truth regulated all his words, wisdom seasoned them and charity consecrated them: consequently, not being of those who sin by the tongue, he was a per-

fect man, according to St. James : *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man ;* ¹ and, indeed, one must be master of one's heart, and of all one's passions, to be master of one's tongue. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. X.

1. James. III. 2.





LVI

RECOLLECTION

(RETIREMENT, INTERIOR LIFE)

I. THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF RECOLLECTION.

1. Recollection shall appear to the Brothers of such great importance, that they shall consider it as one of the principal supports of the society ; and want of custody of the eyes as the source of all kinds of disorder in a community. — *Rules*, Chap. XXIII.

2. In order to render the practice of the virtue of purity easy, apply yourself much to recollection and to modesty in the use of the eyes. — *Med.* 158.

3. Do not allow yourself to give way to curiosity ; it is very pernicious ; it is, perhaps, because you are given to it, that you have such trouble to apply yourself to mental prayer and the other exercises. — *Letters*.

4. By your regularity of life, you will edify your disciples ; you will be to them a continual model of modesty, of wisdom and piety ; and

this will be a very touching instruction for them. — *Med.* 152.

5. Are you reserved and modest, not only before your Brothers, but also before your disciples, and do you always give them good example ? Does the wisdom that your pupils remark in you make such an impression on them, that it alone is capable of making them wise ? It is this good effect that your quality of being their teacher should produce in your pupils. — *Med.* 128.

6. Your employment requires you to have some relations with outside people. Be careful that you never appear among them without giving edification ; and be so modest and reserved as to be everywhere the good odour of Jesus Christ. Act in such a way that your whole exterior, all your words and actions, breathe virtue. It is only for this purpose that God wishes you outside in the exercise of your duties ; prepare yourself, therefore, in retirement, to correspond with His intentions. — *Med.* 98.

7. It is only in retirement and prayer that a man is enlightened by God, and attains a real transfiguration, or rather, an entire transfiguration of himself. — *Med.* 152.

8. It is in solitude that we learn how to detach ourselves from everything that constitutes the pleasure of those who live in the

world, and then to converse with God. — *Med.* 171.

9. In order to give ourselves to God, it does not suffice to abandon what we possess and all exterior things; we must also labour to perfect ourselves within and renounce our passions and inclinations. It is in retirement that this advantage is found. Indeed, it is impossible to overcome ourselves, and it is very difficult to know ourselves, in the midst of the world. Do we avail ourselves of the advantage that we have of living retired from the world, to study ourselves and not to follow the movements of nature in anything? — *Med.* 97.

10. How happy we are when we are detached from everything, and our conscience is pure and clear! The less we communicate with people of the world, the more we possess this advantage. — *Med.* 105.

II. THE PRACTICE OF RECOLLECTION.

1. It may be said in general, that in all their exterior actions, the Brothers should manifest great modesty and humility, together with the wisdom befitting their profession. — *Rules*, Chap. XXIII.

2. Everything in you, both exterior and interior, should breathe of the holiness to which your profession obliges you. Your exte-

rior should be holy, because it should be edifying; you should be so recollected, so modest and reserved, that it may truly appear that God is in you, and that you may have only Him in view in your whole conduct. — *Med.* 60.

3. When we love exterior retirement, we must arrive at that state in which we shall have but disgust for the world and things created, so that we may say with St. Paul : *The world is crucified to me, and I to the world.*¹ — *Collection.*

4. Interior retirement places us in a kind of necessity, whilst it lasts, to occupy ourselves with God and the things of God. — *Collection.*

5. Giddiness and curiosity are great evils in the service of God. Endeavour, therefore, my dear Brother, to build up your interior; you understand well that this is the principal thing that leads to God. Your eyes are your greatest enemies; hence you should always watch over them to see only what is necessary. The greatest good you can acquire is recollection, and when you will have acquired it, you may say what Solomon said of wisdom : *All good things come to me together with her.*² — *Letters.*

6. Curiosity is one of the greatest obstacles to piety; be careful, therefore, and apply your-

1. Gal. VI. 14.

2. Wisdom. VII. 11.

self especially to recollection and the presence of God ; because this is the best means to become interior. For the love of God, labour for this end. You recognize the harm that dissipation causes in you ; do, therefore, govern your eyes and your tongue. Nothing is so important for you as this practice ; this means will procure for you the view of God in your exercises and engage you to perform them well, both interiorly and exteriorly ; because God does not only require the exterior of our actions, but also that they be performed with interior dispositions. — *Letters*.

7. Ask of God an ardent affection for the interior life, so that all the movements of your life may be like so many degrees of a more intimate union with Him. — *Med.* 103.

8. The profession that you exercise, obliges you, to a certain extent, to be in the world every day, where everything you do is observed ; this should engage you not to neglect anything to be models of all virtues in the eyes of the seculars in the midst of whom you have to live. It is especially by your gravity and modesty that you must endeavour to edify them ; because, if they were to observe in you any trait of frivolity or dissipation, they would be easily scandalized, whereas, if you appear before them with a recollected exterior, they will have much veneration for you. — *Med.* 69.

9. If you allow your mind to become unrestrained and heedless, you will not be able to

apply yourself properly to mental prayer and other spiritual exercises ; you will become so distracted as to lose all facility for interior recollection. Yet this recollection is very necessary if you would control your passions and prevent them from obtaining the mastery on many occasions that will present themselves in the exercise of your employment. — *Collection.*

III. THE RECOLLECTION AND INTERIOR LIFE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

No one had the appearance of a saint more than St. John Baptist De La Salle. He was seen everywhere with an air of devotion which revealed an interior in which the Holy Ghost dwelt and where he kept all the powers of his soul applied to the exercise of adoration, love, annihilation and other sentiments of religion. This spirit of recollection inspired him with the wish of rendering everywhere his homage to the divine Majesty ; in order to do so with respect and associate his body with his mind in the payment of this just tribute, when he was in the house, he knelt down in the different places where he entered, and during the space of an *Ave Maria* adored in spirit and truth the heavenly Father, who seeks such adorers.

Always the same, he appeared like one whose heart, fixed on heaven, seemed to take no interest in what passed in this world ; like one endeavouring to regulate his holiest desires and all his projects for the glory of God, solely in accordance with the divine pleasure.

This man, who was meek and humble of heart, appeared dead to everything, a man in whom nature dared no longer to appear or ask for anything, a man whose life was entirely supernatural, heavenly and divine ; who thought, spoke and acted as being from the other world or of a different nature from other men ; one for whom virtue had become his element, God his

life, Jesus Christ, the soul and centre. In prayer, an angel ; at the altar, a seraphim ; in conduct, an apostle ; in tribulation, a real Job ; in poverty, a new Tobias ; in abandonment to Providence and in the rigours of penance, another Francis of Assisium : in the practice of obedience, a new Dositheus : in the exercise of all virtues, a perfect disciple of Jesus Christ — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXIX.





LVII

THE REIGN OF GOD

I. NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF THE REIGN OF GOD IN SOULS.

1. It is to you that Our Lord addresses these words of the Gospel: *Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God.*¹ Indeed, you should not have entered this house except to seek it, first, for yourself ; secondly, for those whose instruction God has confided to you. You should seek in this world only the establishment of the reign of God in your soul for this life and the next. For this purpose, you must endeavour to make Him reign in your heart by grace and the plenitude of His love ; you should live for Him, and it is this life of God Himself that should be the life of your soul. — *Med.* 67.

2. Often reflect on the end of your calling, and let it contribute to the establishment and maintenance of the reign of God in the hearts of your pupils. Do you believe that one of the best means to obtain this advantage, is, in the first place, to make God reign in yourself ; you will then succeed in making Him reign in your

1. Matt. VI. 33.

pupils, so that they may have no action or movement but in Him ? — *Med.* 67.

3. In order to be occupied only with the means of making God reign in you and in the souls of those whom you instruct, it is necessary that you do not make yourself uneasy with regard to bodily wants, because these two kinds of solicitude are in opposition, and because application to exterior things destroys in the soul the care of those which relate to God and His service. — *Med.* 67.

4. In order that Jesus Christ may reign in your soul, you must, under His leadership, combat the enemies of your salvation, who are likewise His enemies. For, as He desires to establish in you His peace, which, according to St. Paul, should be victorious in your hearts, it is necessary for this purpose that you overcome with Him and by His help, all that may be an obstacle, such as your passions and wicked inclinations ; so that, destroying in you the old man of sin who has reigned there in the past, you may be delivered from the shameful slavery to which sin has reduced you. — *Med.* 22.

5. Abandon yourself entirely to the guidance of Our Lord, and allow Him to reign over all your interior movements in so absolute a manner on His part and so dependent a one on yours, that you may really be able to say, that it is no longer you who live, but that it is Jesus Christ who liveth in you. — *Med.* 22.

6. Induce those whom you teach to look upon sin as a shameful disease which infects souls, renders them unworthy to approach God and appear before Him; inspire them with the love of virtue; impress on them sentiments of piety, and act in such a manner that God may not cease to reign in them; because then they will have no part with sin, or at least, they will avoid grievous sin which kills the soul. — *Med.* 67.

II. THE REIGN OF GOD IN THE SOUL OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

When St. John Baptist De La Salle happened to be alone, he was often heard to abandon himself to the transports which the Holy Ghost produces in the souls of which He has taken possession. *Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee; in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps.*¹ *Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever.*² It often happened that he raised his eyes to heaven with so much devotion, and animated with such heavenly fire, that those who observed him felt the sparks falling on their own hearts and enkindling them with piety and the love of God. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. IX.

1. Ps. LXXXIII. 6.

2. Ps. LXXII. 26.



LVIII

REGULARITY

I. THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF REGULARITY.

1. The Brothers shall have very special esteem for all that concerns regularity, however insignificant it may appear, regarding it as being for them the first means of sanctification, because it furnishes them with the principal protection against all the temptations of the devil, however violent they may be, and because God attaches His graces thereto in a special manner. — *Rules*, Chap. XVI.

2. Regularity is the first support of Communities, and it is such as to make them immovable as long as it subsists; and irregularity is the chief source of their destruction, and of the loss of their members. With this view, the Brothers shall prefer the Rules and practices of their Institute to all other practices, how holy soever in themselves, unless they concern the commandments of God or of the Church. — *Rules*, Chap. XVI.

3. A holy rule is one of the most salutary advantages we can enjoy in this life, and one

of the principal means we can employ to give ourselves to God. — *Med.* III.

4. Each Brother shall be particularly careful not to do anything which is, or might be, contrary to the regularity and good order of the house. For this purpose, they shall all make account of failing in the least point of regularity, wishing to do in all things and very exactly the will of God, which is marked out for them by the Rules and practices of the Institute. — *Rules*, Chap. XVI.

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF REGULARITY.

1. We must be faithful to the Rules :
1. Because they are the first means of sanctification in a community. 2. Because our measure of grace is determined by our fidelity. 3. Because we advance more in the path of perfection by the observance of the Rules than by any other way. — *Collection*.

2. We must do everything through a principle of regularity. God will bless what you do only in so much as you shall so do it. — *Letters*.

3. Do not expect to have the spirit of God in abundance, unless you punctually execute what you know to be His will. Be very careful, therefore, to observe the Rules exactly. — *Med.* 42.

4. The more exact the observance of regularity is in a community, the more fully will the spirit of God abound, the greater will be the interior consolations enjoyed by the religious, the happier will they be in their state, and the more will they be blessed by God. — *Collection.*

5. The more regular you are, the more will you acquire the perfection of your state. — *Med. III.*

6. The love we have for the Rules is a mark of vocation. — *Letters.*

7. The more exact your regularity, the better will you be prepared to draw children to God and make them thoroughly pious. — *Med. 131.*

III. THE MEANS TO ACQUIRE REGULARITY.

1. To be perfectly regular, never judge of community practices by external appearances, but look on them solely in their relation to the will of God, which is the same in them all, whatever they may be. — *Collection.*

2. If you wish to render your regularity agreeable and of much value in the sight of God, it is necessary that it should be interior and accompanied with purity of intention. Endeavour to offer to God the least as well as the most important observances, to do nothing from habit, routine, custom and with a certain

heedlessness which prevents the forming of our intention and proposing of an object. Be careful, also, to unite all your actions to those of Our Lord in order to give them all the value they can have. — *Spirit and Virtues.*

3. Be faithful to do all that God requires of you, bearing in mind that it is by His orders that you must conduct yourself in all things ; thus, be exact in leaving everything as soon as the bell rings for an exercise, and let nothing retain you. When you have finished your school work, be careful not to delay for any reason whatever, but hasten to return to your community. The same God who gave you your employment now withdraws you from it ; what more do you require ? You must show on all occasions that you are happy to go where He calls at the first sign by which He intimates His will. — *Med. 6.*

4. It is a good practice to read the Rules frequently in order to be faithful to them ; you know that it is by their observance that you will sanctify yourself. — *Letters.*

IV. REGULARITY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

During nearly forty years that St. John Baptist De La Salle lived with the Brothers, his life was a perfect model of regularity, which he constantly recommended to them. He was the first to observe with incomparable fidelity the regulations he has introduced, being careful to elicit respect for them by his example and long practice before giving them the force of law.

The zeal of the holy Founder for regularity corresponded with the high idea he had of it. He maintained it with a firmness inexorable against relaxation, and immovable against those who attacked it. He reprimanded those who were guilty of the least breach of regularity as soon as he perceived it. "If you violate your Rules", said he with a holy vehemence to those who were so thoughtless as to disregard them through weak complaisance, "God will abandon you as well as those from whom you expect favours." — *Spirit and Virtues.*



LIX

RENOVATION

I. THE NECESSITY OF RENOVATION.

1. The practice of interior renovation is so much the more necessary as human nature of itself always inclines to relaxation, and we easily belie the best resolutions we made on entering religion. Hence, besides the annual retreat, take an hour every week, and spend it entirely in spiritual reading and mental prayer, going over your Rules and resolutions, and examining whether, in all things, you have followed God's will in the manner you proposed. If necessary, note all the faults you have committed during the week, so as to humble yourself the more, and to take means to correct yourself. — *Collection.*

2. Act in such a way that your principal virtues be firmness and fidelity in the practice of well-doing, especially with regard to your Rules and spiritual exercises. Never relax on these points. Often pray for this firmness and fidelity ; perseverance depends on them. You will thus avoid the misfortune of which the Scripture speaks : *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.* ¹ — *Collection.*

1. Jer. XLVIII, 10.

3. It is necessary that the change to be affected in us should be interior and that we should be entirely transformed by the light and plenitude of grace and by the possession of the spirit of God. Should any change then appear in our exterior, it is necessary that it should spring forth from the happiness we enjoy in the inmost of our soul by belonging entirely to God, because it will then be occupied only with Him, and with what we should do for love of Him. — *Med.* 152.

II. RENEWAL OF FERVOUR AT ST. YON
BY THE RETURN OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

The Brothers saw their Founder again at St. Yon as an angel from heaven. His return from the South was to them an increase of joy and grace, and his presence caused itself to be felt by the blessings it brought. The Brothers and Novices, in their happiness at having in their midst their master in perfection, vied with one another to profit by the little time they had to enjoy his presence. St. John Baptist De La Salle was in their midst like a torch that diffuses a brighter light in proportion as it approaches its end. He no longer lived except like one from the other world, of which he frequently spoke. — *Life* by Blain, Bk. III. Chap. XVII.





LX

MEALS (TEMPERANCE)

1. Consider yourself as a poor beggar to whom food is given in alms, and who should not find fault, however poorly prepared it may be. Always be satisfied with what is served, desire nothing special, and conform in all things to the community. — *Collection.*

2. How do you act at meals? Are you not occupied more with your food than with the reading? Do you not eat with too much avidity, or too slowly, in order the better to relish what is placed before you? Do you mix your wine well with water? Do you not commit some other faults during meals? — *Collection.*

3. Make it a rule never to speak of eating or drinking; do not even pay attention to these things, and in whatever manner you may be served, show that you are satisfied. — *Collection.*

4. Reflect on the eternal banquet in which you will participate, if you voluntarily deprive yourself of something for God's sake. Often descend into hell in spirit, and see how the sensual are there treated. — *Collection.*

5. You should make your life austere in a manner very becoming to your state by mortifying yourself every day in something at your meals, either as to the quality or the savour of the dishes or as to the quantity, eating moderately, and leaving the table without being entirely satiated, or in allowing your senses only what is absolutely necessary. — *Med. 80.*

II. THE TEMPERANCE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

When St. John Baptist De La Salle was at table, whether he was distracted or whether he was attentive, he ate what was served to him without ever asking for anything, or making the least sign that anything was wanting. The worst food no longer made him feel any disgust; at least, he would eat without paying attention, and rise from table to say grace without knowing what he had eaten. — *Life*, by Blain, Bk. II Chap. I.



LXI

THE HOLY GHOST

I. THE EFFECTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN SOULS.

1. The Spirit of God should dwell in you, in order that you may no longer act except by His movement: draw Him to yourself by a well disposed heart. — *Med.* 43.

2. It is by His Holy Spirit that God reigns in us; it is even by the Most Blessed Trinity in us, according to what Our Lord says in St. John: *If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.*¹ — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

3. The more we are detached from what pleases the senses, the more means we have of approaching God purely and with entire detachment from all creatures; it is then, indeed, that the Spirit of God comes into a soul and fills it with His graces. — *Med.* 35.

4. It is through mental prayer that the Holy Ghost will come to us, and as Our Lord promised His Apostles, teach us all the truths of

1. John. XIV. 23.

religion and the maxims of Christianity, which you should thoroughly know and practice, being obliged to inculcate them to others. — *Med.* 191.

5. Chaste bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost ; God takes complacency in these souls, is pleased to instruct them in the ways He wishes them to follow to be entirely His, and St. Paul says : *The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* ¹

6. The Holy Ghost diffuses in the souls that possess Him such a plenitude of grace that they allow themselves to be conducted so well by the same Spirit, that they lose all human affection for created things, and no longer have any but for God, whom they possess interiorly, and for everything that relates to Him. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

7. If you wish to prepare yourself, as far as God requires of you, to receive the Holy Ghost with the abundance of His gifts, apply yourself to mental prayer with attention and fervour ; do not cease praying ; often repeat with the Church : *Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created : and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.* ² — *Med.* 42.

8. Do you sometimes reflect on your happiness in having the Holy Ghost dwell in you as in His temple, and in having Him pray in you

1. I Cor. II. 10.

2. Ps. CIII. 30.

and for you? Abandon yourself entirely to this divine Spirit so that He may ask of God for you all that is necessary for the welfare of your soul and the souls of those who are confided to you, and that you may act only through Him. — *Med.* 62.

9. The Holy Ghost, who dwells in you, should penetrate the depths of your souls: it is in them that He should pray most particularly. It is in the interests of the soul that He communicates Himself to it, that He unites Himself to it, and makes known to it what God requires that it may be entirely His. It is there that He bestows on it His divine love, with which He honours holy souls, which no longer cling to earth: and it is then that, disengaged from all affection to creatures, He makes it His sanctuary, keeping them always occupied with God, and making them live only in God and for God. — *Med.* 43.

10. You stand in need of the plenitude of the Spirit of God in your state, since you should live and be guided therein only by the spirit and light of faith, and since it is only the Holy Ghost who can put you in this disposition. — *Med.* 43.

11. In order to acquit yourself of your duty of instructing the children in their Christian duties with as much exactitude as God requires of you, often give yourself up to the Spirit of Our Lord, in order to act only through Him,

and that human views may have no share therein, and that, the Holy Ghost thus coming down on your pupils, they may fully possess the spirit of Christianity. — *Med.* 195.

12. You are exercising an employment which obliges you to touch hearts ; now, you cannot do it without the Holy Ghost. Ask God to give you the same grace which He bestowed on the Apostles ; so that, after having filled you with His Spirit in order to sanctify you, He may also communicate it to you to procure the salvation of others. — *Med.* 43.

13. How good Thou art, O my God, to bestow Thy Holy Spirit on me ! It is doubtless in order to guide and direct me in my actions. Thus, your intention is that I should do nothing except by the movement of Thy Divine Spirit ; that I should have no sentiments but those with which Thy Holy Spirit will inspire me, and that I have no affections but such as are conformable to thine ; that, through Thy Divine Spirit, I may be penetrated and occupied with Thee and void of creatures ; because this Holy Spirit makes visible in creatures only what is from Thee, in order to destroy entirely in us all idea that we might have of them which would be but an obstacle to our being penetrated with Thee. Come, therefore, O Holy Ghost, to take possession of my heart, and so animate all my actions, that it may be said that Thou dost produce them more than I, and that I may no longer have any life,

movement or action but inasmuch as Thou dost give me them Thyself. — *Method of Mental Prayer.*

II. DOCILITY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE. TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

St. John Baptist De La Salle believing himself unworthy of communing with God and incapable of doing it in a manner worthy of Him, had made it a study to use only expressions and terms which the Holy Ghost himself had inspired, dictated and sanctioned. Verses of the Psalms, so full of the divine fire and so well calculated to enkindle it in hearts, were the usual language he used in communing with God.

He found so much advantage in this method, that he drew up for his own use, and later for that of his disciples, a little collection of aspirations of the heart to God, taken entirely from the most tender and affective verses of the Holy Scripture, in order to address God in the language that God Himself had taught to be used, and that the Holy Ghost, who alone teaches us how to pray well, might be the only author of his prayer. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. IX.



THE SAINTS

I. THE HAPPINESS OF THE SAINTS.

1. *We know, says St. John, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him : because we shall see Him as He is.*¹ What happiness for the saints to be made like to God, by the participation of His nature and divine perfections ! God is truly in His saints by an intimate communication of His greatness, and the saints are in God : because their being is entirely penetrated with God, and they can think but of Him, and love only Him.

Admire the greatness of the happiness which they enjoy in heaven and the lustre of the glory they receive, and pray to them to obtain for you from God the grace of sharing therein after your death. — *Med.* 183.

2. Adore God, who is so admirable in His saints ; humble yourself at the feet of His sovereign Majesty ; and learn how to sanctify yourself. Woe to him who, after so many examples of piety, has, notwithstanding, only sentiments of vanity. — *Med.* 184.

1. I John III., 2.

II. THE IMITATION OF THE SAINTS.

1. Whatever hope we may have of participating in the happiness of the saints, it will be vain, unless we strive to become saints ourselves by the means that they employed. In imitation of so many saints, daily sigh for something to suffer, with the desire and hope of being one day clothed like them with immortality in heaven. — *Med.* 183.

2. It will not be without much fruit that we shall beseech the saints to pray for us and to have compassion for us; for, if whilst they were on earth they had compassion for sinners and prayed to God for them, for how much greater a reason should they now be filled with pity for men; because they always have before their eyes Him who is the source of mercy, and because, knowing our miseries better now than they did whilst they were in life, their charity for us, far from being diminished, should be so much the greater! — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVII.

3. Following the example of the saints, take Our Lord for your model, and, like them, sigh after the happiness which they enjoy, and with St. Paul, *looking not at the things which are seen, which are temporal: but the things not seen, which are eternal.*¹ — *Med.* 183.

4. Let us, who wish to share in the happy

1. II Cor. IV. 18.

lot of the saints, direct our thoughts to heaven; and let the sight of the holy relics serve us as motives to enkindle and increase within us the spirit of martyrdom, the contempt of the world, and an ardent love for our Lord Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 184.

5. Your sanctification is the first end you should have had in view when you entered this community, and which should keep you therein; it is for this reason that we have withdrawn from the world and subjected ourselves to all sorts of piety. How idle to have come to religion for any other end; since, as the royal prophet says : *Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, into length of days.*¹ As He is infinitely holy, it is very just that those who dwell therein should become holy when they enter into a participation of His holiness. — *Med.* 77.

III. APPLICATION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TO ACQUIRE THE HOLINESS OF HIS STATE.

What did not St. John Baptist De La Salle do to acquire the holiness of his state ! He abhorred the least sins, and carefully and perseveringly avoided the least faults. He fled even from the shadow of sin and whatever might have the appearance of evil : for he knew no other evil than that of offending God. There was no sort of good for which he was not disposed, although he was entirely given to that with which divine Providence had charged him. As he placed no limits to his perfection, he placed none to

1. Ps. XCII. 5.

the labour necessary to acquire virtue in an eminent degree. — *Spirit and Virtues*. Chap. IV.

IV. DEVOTION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE TO THE SAINTS.

His devotion embraced all the saints in heaven : he honoured them all most profoundly. Some years before his death, he wished the Brothers to add this at the end of their prayers : *Omnēs sancti et sanctę Dei, intercedite pro nobis*. He prescribed them to take the history of their lives as one of the subjects of conversation after their meals : this he set down in the collection of different matters that he drew up for after-meal conversation. " They shall converse," he says, " on the lives of the Saints, especially of those in whom the spirit of our Institute was most conspicuous : likewise of such as have been remarkable for the spirit of mortification and of zeal for the salvation of souls. " — *Spirit and Virtues*. Chap. IV.



LXIII

SILENCE

I. THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF SILENCE.

1. Hold silence in great esteem and observe it willingly ; for it is the guardian of all virtues and an obstacle to all vices, since it prevents detraction, untruthful and unbecoming language. It is the means of keeping us occupied only with necessary things, and of preventing the detractions which follow frivolous conversation and useless words — *Collection*.

2. Often reflect that he who is not reserved in speech cannot become spiritual, and that a sure means of attaining perfection rapidly, is to avoid sins of the tongue. — *Collection*.

3. Do not speak without necessity out of recreation time, and, when obliged to speak, do so with permission, reserve, in a low voice and in few words. — *Collection*.

4. Avoid speaking, even of necessary things, when it may be deferred ; this mortification is very meritorious and conducive to perfection, for God's graces and instructions are lost by

superfluous words, as certain liquids lose their essence by exposure to the air. — *Collection.*

5. Strive always to unite interior and exterior silence ; forget created things to think only of God and His holy presence, and with whom you should endeavour always to converse interiorly. — *Collection.*

6. It is easy to speak a long time to God when we speak little to men : consider moreover that silence is one of the best means of avoiding sin and maintaining fervour. — *Med. 190.*

7. We must avoid useless words : 1. Because as Our Lord says in the Gospel : *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment.*¹ 2. Because the time spent in useless conversation is, to say the least, time lost : yet it should be dear to us, since it is given to us to purchase heaven. 3. Because a Christian and still more a religious, desecrates his heart and tongue by useless words, and according to St. Bernard, useless words spoken by religious are blasphemies. — *Collection.*

8. Silence is the first means of establishing regularity in a house ; for unless it reigns, order in a religious house cannot be expected. — *Med. 92.*

1. Matt. XII. 36.

II. THE PRACTICE OF SILENCE.

1. Be very exact to keep silence, because it is one of the principal points of regularity, without which a house falls into disorder. You may say to me that you have a great desire to keep silence, but the occasion in which you continually find yourself to answer those who question you does not permit you to do so; this is a frivolous excuse; do you not know on what occasion you should answer and when you should keep silent? Charity alone should make you answer, and you should keep silent on other occasions. — *Letters*.

2. St. Paul says : *Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt* ; ¹ we should never say a word without knowing why and how we say it.

3. It is great wisdom to know when we should keep silent ; let us strive to acquire it. — *Letters*.

III. THE LOVE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR SILENCE.

The rigour with which the holy Founder kept silence, made him be looked upon as an Arsenius. He spoke little and rarely, because, as he said, it is a good means of keeping interiorly retired, whereas the habit of speaking too much causes distraction

1. Coloss. IV. 6.

and the loss of the thought of the presence of God. He inspired his Brothers with the same esteem of silence and recommended this point of regularity above all others, because disorder usually invades communities by intemperance of speech. He was so strict on this point, that he could not suffer any relaxation in it.

He recommends the Brothers to endeavour to join interior and exterior silence, forgetting what is created to remember only God and His holy presence, because it is it which should constitute the occupation of the soul. And, indeed, this is the principal and best silence, and it is this latter which should produce the former, and give it the limits that are calculated to produce excellent fruit. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. VII.



LXIV

SALVATION

I. THE CARE WE SHOULD TAKE OF OUR SALVATION.

1. In the religious state we are in a certain assurance of our salvation if we keep the Rules. — *Letters*.

2. Apply yourself with great zeal and affection to your employment, because this will be a most efficacious means of assuring your salvation. — *Med.* 207.

3. You should live in retirement in order to learn the science of salvation, which you are charged to teach others, and which is one of the fruits you are to derive from it yourself. — *Med.* 135.

4. Nourish yourself with the Holy Communion in order to fortify yourself interiorly and overcome all obstacles to your salvation. — *Med.* 49.

5. In this life we find so many obstacles to salvation, that it is impossible to overcome them, if we are abandoned to ourselves and

to our own guidance. It is for this reason that God has given you guardian angels to watch over you and prevent you from falling by *dashing your foot against a stone*,¹ as the royal prophet says ; that is, in order that the obstacles to salvation you meet with may not make you fall, as also in order to give you inspirations and procure for you help in order to keep you away from the road in which you might meet with very great danger. — *Med.* 197.

II. THE ZEAL WITH WHICH CHRISTIAN TEACHERS SHOULD PROCURE THE SALVATION OF THOSE CONFIDED TO THEIR CARE.

1. It is God Himself who has brought children to you ; it is God who makes you responsible for their salvation, and who has placed you under the obligation of providing for all their spiritual wants : this should be your continual endeavour. — *Med.* 37.

2. You are the ministers of God in the employment you exercise, you should co-operate with Him and enter into His designs to procure the salvation of the children with whom you are charged, especially those who are inclined to vice. — *Med.* 56.

3. Consider that the account you shall have to render to God will be so much the greater as it will extend to the children whom God has confided to your care ; because, on the day

of judgment, you shall have to answer for their souls as well as for your own. You should even be convinced that God will begin by asking you give an account of the souls of your children before your own. Because, since you have been charged with their guidance, you have obliged yourself to procure their salvation with as much application as your own, and, consequently, you bound yourself to employ yourself entirely in saving souls. It is of this that St. Paul admonishes you, saying that they who have charge of others shall render an account to God for them. Observe that the Apostle does not say that it will be of their own souls that they shall have to render an account, but of the souls of those with which they are charged. It is therefore over them that they must *watch as being to render an account of their souls*.¹ — *Med.* 205.

Let all your time be employed in these two things : in earnestly asking of God the salvation of those who are under your care ; and then, after having sought the means that are best calculated for this end, in labouring to have them put in practice by your pupils. — *Med.* 189.

III. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AND SALVATION.

St. John Baptist De La Salle proposed to himself above all things the glory of God, which he made the only object of his designs, according to the precept

1. Heb. XIII. 17.

of Our Lord. See ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. **Considering** his own excellency and that of the spiritual kingdom which God has given him, as the end towards which all things are directed, and that God himself is worth his worship as nothing but the Father and Creator of the world, considering in those words of Our Lord, *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, if he suffer the loss of his own soul?* **1.** Come down all creatures in nothing but God as the sovereign Master and Creator of the human world, he made us principal members united in having recourse to Him, in depending on His assistance, and to Him and in communicating His graces to Him. In this respect we conceived neither ourselves nor our own human kind was the power that first directed him when he came into the world, but moved of his Creator as what first had brought him into the world. As to his intention was to show what is the will of God, he conceived all his pleasure in making it known the nature of the greatest benefits of God, and those which he looked upon as great means to eternal salvation. — *Spirit and Virtues, Chap. II.*

1. Matt. VI. 33.

2. Matt. XVI. 26.



SUFFERINGS

I. SUFFERING IS THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

1. We cannot reach heaven except by the way of tribulation. After the example of St. Paul, we should not *glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*,¹ which He sanctified by carrying it, and which is our life and our salvation, because it is the source of our redemption. — *Med.* 149.

2. St. Paul says that *through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God*.² In saying : *we must*, he makes us well understand that it would be requiring a miracle from God to pretend that He would make us enter heaven without going by the necessary way to arrive thereat : therefore, without waiting for such a miracle, take the right road to heaven, which is that of sufferings ; they are the narrow way ; make the necessary efforts to arrive by this way : Our Lord will not fail to help you. — *Med.* 74.

1. Gal. VI. 14.

3. What animated the saints to suffer so much in this life in order to enjoy a happy eternity hereafter, is the example of Our Lord, and our obligation to imitate Him. — *Med.* 183.

II. FAITH SHOWS US THE ADVANTAGES OF SUFFERINGS.

1. As members of Jesus Christ, we should feel honoured in suffering like Him and for Him ; like St. Paul, you should not glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹ — *Med.* 28.

2. Suffer silently all the trials and contradictions of life ; do not be worried and do not complain. You must look upon everything you have to suffer from your neighbour as presents and benefits from God. It is only pure faith that can inspire such sentiments. — *Med.* 87.

3. Do you honour the cross when you have the advantage to carry one ? Do you thank God for the honour He is conferring on you ? Do you protest on such occasions that you glory only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Is not the cross a torture for you rather than a mark of honour, because you look on it only as the thing which torments and crucifies you, instead of receiving it with

¹ Gal. VI. 14.

affection and respect, as a gift of God and an honour He does you? And yet it is thus that you should embrace the cross, if you wish to suffer as a Christian. — *Med.* 121.

4. Sufferings place you in a state of protecting yourself more easily from sin, and they dispose you to receive the graces of God in abundance. Act in such a way as to derive this fruit from the sufferings you have to endure. — *Med.* 124.

III. THE LOVE OF SUFFERINGS IS A CHOICE GRACE RESERVED FOR GENEROUS SOULS.

1. We should understand that, the life of Our Lord having been but a continual cross and martyrdom, we shall never appear better as His servants and imitators, than in imprinting on ourselves the sign of the holy Cross, and in suffering pains similar to His. How could we dare seek another way to please God, to honour Him and offer Him a sacrifice that might be agreeable, than this way of the blessed Cross, since, in order to honour His Father, Jesus Our Lord did not pass a single hour of His life without suffering, and there has been no saint in the world without affliction and the cross! — *Med.* 165.

2. Offer yourself daily to God with all that you suffer, in order that He may dispose of you according to His good pleasure. — *Letters.*

3. Should austerity shorten our days, would it not procure for us in compensation a great good in purifying our soul and body? And is it not austerity that weakens the passions and delivers the body from all corruption? — *Med.* 105.

4. Often protest to God that you will take pleasure in suffering all the pains which He may be pleased to send you. Do not complain of anything that may be said or done against you; show by your silence and patience that you are satisfied and that you endure it willingly for the love of God. Indeed, one of the best means to acquire and preserve this divine love is to suffer with joy. — *Med.* 31.

5. You should, for the love of God, be disposed to mortify yourselves and suffer to be mortified by others every day and every hour, both interiorly and exteriorly. — *Med.* 31.

IV. UNION WITH OUR LORD IN SUFFERING.

1. We are Christians only inasmuch as we conformable to Our Lord, and it is the love of sufferings and mortification that renders us conformable to Him. Endeavour therefore never to pass a day without mortifying yourself, and do so through the spirit of faith, and in order to give evidence of your religious profession. — *Med.* 167.

2. When, by means of retirement and prayer, a soul is enlightened by God and transformed

with Jesus Christ, it should be happy in dwelling on His Cross and Passion, to show that all its desire is to be conformable to Him in His suffering state. — *Med.* 152.

3. We, who are in sin and have lived in sin, should render ourselves conformable to Jesus as a victim and suffer with Him, if we wish to have Him for our Head, to be one of His members and to destroy sin in ourselves. — *Med.* 152.

V. THE LOVE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FOR SUFFERINGS.

St. John Baptist De La Salle, like St. Paul, burned with the desire of filling up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ; hence, his love of the cross, with which those are ordinarily enflamed who are animated with the spirit of penance. Far from trembling at the approach of pain, he then experienced a lively joy that was depicted on his countenance always serene and tranquil.

Sickness, watchings, the hardness of his bed, the hair-shirt, iron girdles, fasting and disciplines, were, the instruments of which the spirit of God made use in order to depict in His servant the image of the Man of sorrows.

The most unfortunate accidents, the sorest disgrace, judgments that blasted his character, calumnies, acts of injustice, affronts and all sorts of bad treatment always found him disposed to receive them with joy, with the thought that he was happy to have a part in the cross of Our Lord and to drink of His chalice. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXIV.



LXVI

TEMPTATIONS

I. TEMPTATIONS MUST NOT SURPRISE US.

1. When you left the world, did you expect to wage continual war against the devil and yourself? Are you always on your guard as you should be, to resist the devil? and not to abandon yourself to sensual pleasures? — *Med. 17.*

2. Have you always believed that in order to give yourself entirely to God, you must be prepared to be tempted? Are you not surprised when temptation besets you? — *Med. 17.*

3. Temptations of religious are generally the more violent as they advance the more in virtue; for when they earnestly labour to acquire the perfection of their state, the devil, knowing that if they persevere, they will do him much harm both by their example and by the graces which their prayers will obtain for others, *goeth about seeking whom he may devour.*¹ — *Med. 72.*

1. I Peter. V. 8.

4. The Gospel telling us that Jesus went into the desert, does not say it was for the purpose of retiring from the company of men or to pray, but to be tempted ; and He does so to teach us that the first step we should take when we wish to give ourselves to God, is to leave the world itself and all the enemies of our salvation. — *Med.* 17.

5. It is in retirement, says St. Ambrose, that we must expect to be tempted and to be subjected to many trials. It is also of this that the wise man warns us saying, that they who come to the service of God should be prepared for temptation. ¹ — *Med.* 17.

6. What should engage a soul that truly belongs to God to be always prepared for temptation, is because, as Job says : *The life of man upon earth is a continual temptation,* ² or according to the Vulgate, a *warfare*. Whence we can conclude that, if God wishes or allows us to be tempted in this world, it is because we must always combat the devil, our passions and our inclinations, which will not cease to be at war with our soul as long as it is united to our body. This made St. Jerome say that it is impossible that a soul should not be tempted in this life, and that, if Our Lord himself was tempted, no man may expect to cross the stormy sea of this world without being tried by temptation. — *Med.* 17.

1. Ecclus. II. 1.

2. Job. VII. 1.

7. The devil not being able to bear the progress in virtue and the fruit produced in souls of those who by their irreproachable life and holy doctrine sustain the Gospel and religion, never ceases to torment them himself or by his agents. St. Paul says : *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*¹ This will be your lot and portion as long as you shall be in this world. — *Med.* 100.

II. TEMPTATIONS MAY BE VERY ADVANTAGEOUS TO US.

1. Temptation is very advantageous to those who are engaged in the service of God, because it is one of the best means that they can employ to detach themselves entirely from sin and the affection for sin. — *Med.* 17.

2. Look upon it as a great misfortune not to be tempted ; in fact, it is a sign that we do not overcome ourselves in anything, and that we allow ourselves to be easily overcome by our passions. It is also, in a certain way, a sign of reprobation and abandonment by God, who tries those whom He loves, and is pleased to see them tempted, as were Job and Tobias, two of His most faithful servants. — *Med.* 17.

3. The angel that accompanied the young Tobias said to the father of the latter : *Because thou wast agreeable to God, it was necessary*

1. II Tim. III. 12.

*that temptation should prove thee.*¹ This should thoroughly convince you of the necessity of this kind of trial, because it will be for you the source of abundant graces. Do not therefore believe, says St. Chrysostom, that you are abandoned by God when you are tempted: on the contrary, it is one of the best signs you can have that He is specially careful of your salvation, from the fact that He furnishes you with the occasion of combating and exercising yourself in the practice of virtue, and by this means of strengthening yourself; for we insensibly acquire sublime virtue when we always remain immovable and inflexible in the practice of good notwithstanding the violent temptations by which we are assailed. — *Med. 17.*

III. MEANS OF COMBATING TEMPTATIONS.

1. You cannot find a more prompt or efficacious remedy against your temptations or relapses into sin than the reception of the body of Our Lord. Receive it often, so that, by this means, your soul may not fall into sin. — *Med. 54.*

2. Prayer draws down the grace of God on us and keeps away temptation; it is by it that God becomes our strength against the devil. — *Med. 174.*

1. Job. XII. 13.

3. Our Lord says of the devil of impurity : *This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.* He places prayer before fasting, to point out to us that, although mortification be very necessary to overcome the devil of impurity, it is still more important to arm ourselves with prayer when we are attacked. When, therefore, you are assailed by the tempter, do not cease praying until you have completely driven him from you. — *Mat. 36.*

4. Apply yourself with all the more affection to prayer in acidity or when assailed by temptation, despite the trouble you may experience. — *Collection.*

5. We cannot be too much astonished at the marvelous effects produced by prayer and the privation of sensual pleasures, and we cannot make too much use of these two remedies in the trials and temptations of life. These are two efficacious means of obtaining from God all the graces we need. — *Mat. 157.*

6. You should not be uneasy or troubled at your temptations : when they come, abandon yourself to God as to your good father : ask Him to sustain you : convince yourself that you cannot do so of yourself. Go to the sacraments : in them you will find the strength which is necessary to overcome your pains. — *Letters.*

I. Matt. XVII. 20.

7. Often reflect on the expression which animated the blessed spirits in their combat with the devil : *Who is like unto God,*¹ so that it may sustain you in all your temptations, and that each of you when tempted may say : *Is the pleasure that I might have in following this attraction of concupiscence to be compared with that of enjoying God?*² — *Med.* 169.

8. Oh ! how happy you are who are devout to our Blessed Mother, to have the facility of having recourse to her holy name, and, by this sole means, of being in security in the midst of all the dangers of a road as difficult as is that of our life in this world ! — *Med.* 164.

9. It is especially by the continual recollection of the divine truths and assiduous prayer that we can fortify our souls against the attacks of the enemies of our salvation. — *Med.* 181.

IV. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE GIVES WISE ADVICE TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION.

The Brothers who were tried and tempted had only to address themselves to him to ask of him the advice they deemed useful : as soon as they had said a few words to him, they felt their troubles disappearing and they felt themselves urged to love God. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. IX.



TEPIDITY

I. THE CAUSES, EFFECTS AND REMEDIES
FOR TEPIDITY.

1. It sometimes happens that persons who should breathe but God and think only of pleasing Him, because they have consecrated themselves to His service, neglect or abandon it entirely through disgust in order to satisfy their inclinations or even their passions : what desolation is there not then in a community, because there is neither union nor peace where God is not found ? Those who act in this way are really thieves and robbers according to the expression of Our Lord in the Gospel, because they steal the bread they eat, and occupy the places of others who would live according to the spirit and the Rules of the community. Beware of such a misfortune. — *Med. 77.*

2. One soon dies who is sick and does not believe it, or who believes that he can cure himself without a remedy : this happens to those who do not follow the advice of their superiors with docility : they are reduced to

such an extremity that their illness becomes incurable. Have you not sometimes been, and are you not now in this miserable disposition? Should this be the case, sigh before God, and earnestly entreat Him to withdraw you from it as soon as possible, because the remedy for this evil should be applied promptly. — *Med.* 68.

3. You are here in a house of prayer, and prayer should be your principal occupation; the spirit of God will not dwell therein, and God will not pour out His blessings on it but inasmuch as it will be a house of prayer; and when you no longer have the spirit and love of prayer, God will look upon you only with displeasure and as unworthy of an employment which is His own work. — *Med.* 62.

4. Tepidity is the reason for which God neglects a soul, looking on it as unworthy of His graces, because it concerns itself little about Him and endeavours but little to render itself entirely agreeable in His sight. — *Med.* 53.

5. Souls that are tepid, careless and little attached to mental prayer must not be astonished if they are not among the number of those whom He cherishes in a singular manner, and to whom He communicates Himself even to familiarity. They are not intimately united to Him, because they are not given to the exercise which unites souls to God, and in which we learn how to appreciate Him, and to have, even

here on earth, a foretaste of the delights of heaven. — *Med.* 18.

6. Let us, whom God has called to the perfection of the Gospel, be fearful of being lost by attachment to the maxims which conduct to relaxation. — *Med.* 5.

7. It seems to me, my dear Brother, that you make your exercises with but little application and affection ; and yet you will not draw down the graces of God on yourself except by performing them by love, and as well as possible. — *Letters.*

8. There are many persons living in community whom we might ask, with more astonishment and more reason than the labourers who were standing in the market place idle : *Why stand you here all the day idle ?*¹ These are the religious who, having consecrated themselves to God, make profession of labouring for the perfection of their state, and yet remain in community without making any progress in virtue. — *Med.* 13.

9. You should be very careful not to be slothful in the exercises ; it is not thus that God will bless you. We cannot have virtue without doing violence to ourselves ; and it does not suffice to have it only sometimes ; ours must be solid. It is not by looking for and taking our ease that we acquire it. — *Letters.*

1. Matt. XX. 6.

II. ENCOURAGEMENT TO VIRTUE GIVEN BY
ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

My very dear Brothers, said this zealous superior unceasingly, *desire only God, seek only God, be replenished with the spirit of God*. These warm exhortations made a deep impression on them, and when he spoke to them, he felt their souls soften like wax near a great fire. They said that it sufficed for them to hear these words from his mouth, to be induced to serve God with great fidelity, and to change their carelessness into fervour. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. IX.





LXVIII

THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN

I. MOTIVES OF OUR DEVOTION TO MARY.

1. What should especially oblige us to have a great devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin is that she is so much honoured by the Eternal Father, who has given her rank above all pure creatures, because she bore in her womb Him who is His equal and who has the same nature as He. — *Med.* 151.

2. What Mary asks of us is to have a special devotion to her and to procure it for those with whom God has entrusted us. — *Med.* 151.

3. A motive which should particularly induce us to honour the Most Blessed Virgin, is the great benefit we derive from it. — *Med.* 151.

4. If Mary received a great abundance of grace, it is for the purpose of sharing it with those who have recourse to her. Avail yourself, therefore, by your zeal for her honour and by your recourse to her protection, of the advantages offered you. — *Med.* 163.

5. All find a secure refuge in Mary, because of the treasure of grace with which God has enriched her from her entrance into this world. — *Med.* 163.

6. We are in this world only to save ourselves, and we shall find all the means of doing so in Mary ; for, Jesus Christ, in taking life from her, sanctified her and left her a plenitude of grace, capable of not only embalming the soul of our Blessed Mother, but also of enlightening, animating and enkindling the hearts of all those who would have recourse to her by invoking her holy name. Have an affectionate devotion for this holy name. Often recall and invoke it with all the respect and veneration due to it. — *Med.* 164.

7. The road on which you have to travel in this world being dangerous, you need a guide to walk therein with security. Now, you cannot have a better than the Most Blessed Virgin ; for, as she is most pure interiorly and exteriorly, and as she is the treasurer of the graces of God, in order to communicate them to us, she knows all the roads and all the means of guaranteeing us against the dangers to be met with. Hence it is very advantageous to allow ourselves to be guided by her. — *Med.* 164.

8. You doubtless stand in need of light in this world, where as in a stormy sea, your salvation is always in danger ; have recourse to Mary, she will enlighten you and help you to

know the will of God in your regard, because, participating in the light of Jesus Christ her Son, who came into the world to enlighten all men, although many have not known Him, she is herself a true light which shines in the darkness. — *Med.* 104.

9. Often pray to Mary to enlighten your mind and to render it docile to the truth : for, as she knows it perfectly, it is easy for her to instruct you, and to make you what you, who are but darkness, cannot understand. — *Med.* 164.

10. It is not sufficient for you to navigate surely ; it is necessary to arrive in port, otherwise, the distance you have covered would be useless to you, because it would not end where you proposed. Mary, the bright star of the sea, will conduct you thereto without difficulty, because she knows it very well, as well as the course to be taken to arrive thereat. She knew by what road she was to go there herself and she faithfully followed it. Or rather, as she had a perfect knowledge of the ways of God and as she was abundantly prevented by grace, it was this which placed her on the way and made her follow it with ease. She felt how happy one then is, according to the *Imitation of Christ* : *He rides at ease who is carried by the grace of God.*¹ — *Med.* 164.

1. *Imit.* Bk. II, Chap. IX.

11. If it be useful to pray to all the saints, it is much more advantageous to address our prayers to the Most Blessed Virgin, since being the most perfect creature and the most elevated in glory, she enjoys very great power before God, and she can help us very much for our salvation and all our wants by her intercession, which she does not refuse to those who ask it of her with sincere piety and a heart entirely detached from all affection to sin. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVII.

12. All who love Jesus and are loved by Him honour Mary, and they are especially cherished by the Mother of God. — *Med.* 88.

13. Let us rest assured that all we shall do to honour the Most Blessed Virgin shall be abundantly rewarded by God by means of her. Let us always recognize her as our good Mother, since Jesus Christ gave her as such, in the person of St. John, to all who shall be devout to her, when before expiring, He said to the beloved disciple : *Behold thy Mother.* ¹ — *Med.* 151.

II. THE PRACTICE OF DEVOTION TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN.

1. It would be of little use to us to be convinced of the obligation of having a special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, if we were

1. John. XIX. 27.

not to know wherein this devotion consists, and if we were not to practise it effectively on all occasions. As the august Mother of God is above all creatures, we should have a greater devotion to her than to all the other saints, no matter who they may be. We show our devotion for the saints at certain times and on certain days of the year; but that which we should have to the Most Blessed Virgin should be continual. Hence it is of Rule or custom in the Institute : 1. To pass no day without saying the Rosary, and always to say it when walking through the streets; 2. To celebrate all the feasts of the Most Blessed Virgin with great solemnity; 3. To uncover with an inclination whenever she is named or when passing before her image; 4. To look on her as the principal protectress of our Society; to place ourselves daily under her protection, morning and night, at the end of meditation and after each exercise, saying to her that we fly to her patronage and that we place all our confidence in her; 5. To invoke her in our most pressing wants, as our first advocate with God, after Jesus Christ. — *Med.* 151.

2. It is necessary that those who recite the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin perform this exercise with special piety and devotion; and in order to derive from it the fruit that the Church desires, they should consider three things : 1. The excellence and dignity of

the Most Blessed Virgin in whose honour we recite it. 2. Her charity to those who place themselves under her protection. 3. The great need we have of her intercession with God. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVII.

3. With what piety do you say the Rosary? Do you say this prayer as a tribute rendered in our Institute to the Most Blessed Virgin and a powerful means of drawing down her help and protection on it and your employment? — *Med.* 150.

4. Endeavour to imitate the Most Blessed Virgin in her entire detachment, and ask of God, through her help, the grace of a happy death. — *Med.* 156.

III. DEVOTION TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN A MEANS OF APOSTOLATE.

1. How happy you are to have as your end the religious instruction of children, and for this purpose, to teach them catechism every day! One of the best means you can employ in order to succeed, is to have a very special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin and to inculcate it in the hearts of those who are confided to you. — *Med.* 150.

2. One of the principal means to make the faithful pious, is to inspire them with devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, and especially the practice of the holy Rosary. — *Med.* 150.

IV. DEVOTION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN.

St. John Baptist had devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin extremely at heart. He recommends it most particularly to the Brothers in his testament. One of his delights was to advocate and extend it, and to see it growing apace. Eloquent in inculcating so reasonable, so proper, so amiable a devotion, he reminded his disciples that God having given us Mary for our Mother, he recommended us to love her ; that, having established her in heaven and in His Church as the Queen of angels and men, He has made it a duty for us to serve her ; that her sublime quality of Mother of God, the eminence of her sanctity, the greatness of her authority and power oblige us to render her all the homage that may be rendered to a pure creature, and that it would be showing great indifference for one's salvation not to enroll one's self in the service of Mary our good Mother of Mercy, as the Church calls her.

He gloried during his life in declaring himself the servant of Mary, and he always endeavoured to honour her. He was so solicitous to have her spoken of with great respect that he did not allow her to be mentioned without adding the expression *Most Blessed* ; he himself always said it, and he used no other in his works. — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XXVII.





LXIX

VIRTUE

I. IT IS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE . AND PRACTISE VIRTUE.

1. We must practise the most solid virtues, especially humility, patience and obedience, which were so dear and familiar to the Most Holy Mother of God. — *Med.* 83.

2. Adore and admire the paternal providence of God who has withdrawn you from the world to dispose you for the acquisition of the necessary virtues so that you may well acquit yourself of the duties of an employment in which you are to bring up a large number of children in the spirit of Christianity. — *Med.* 131.

3. Ah ! Is it not to be feared that we have less virtue than the primitive Christians ! They lived in the world with more detachment and perfection than some religious, who, nevertheless, are in retirement and obliged by their profession to renounce the world. — *Med.* 116.

4. If you wish that Jesus Christ combat in

you the enemies who can prevent His reign, it is necessary that He should be able to raise an army composed of the virtues with which you should ornament your soul, and which will make Him the absolute Master of your heart. — *Med.* 22.

5. Act in such a way that your principal virtues be firmness and fidelity in well-doing, especially with regard to your Rules and spiritual exercises. Never relax in these points. Often pray for this firmness and fidelity ; perseverance depends on them. You will thus avoid the misfortune of which the Scripture speaks : *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.* ¹ — *Collection.*

II. MEANS OF ACQUIRING AND INCREASING VIRTUE.

1. Nothing is of greater help in performing our duties as religious than to subdue our own will, and it is the most efficacious means of acquiring all sorts of virtues ; because, by frequently subduing our own will we acquire great facility in subduing our passions and inclinations and are impassible of soul on all sorts of occasions, wherein a high perfection consists. — *Med.* 12.

2. When therefore you find it hard to practise virtue, you must try to render it easier by your application to prayer, having prompt recourse to this means, remembering these

1. Jer. XLVIII. 10.

words of Our Lord : *Ask and you shall receive.*¹
— *Med.* 36.

3. How advantageous it is to have given one's self to virtue at an early age ! It is by this means that great facility is acquired to practise it, and that practices of piety seem natural. — *Med.* 98.

4. It is by receiving Holy Communion that you will find relief in your trials, strength in your temptations in order that you may not be overcome by them, and an easy means to make progress in virtue. Do not, therefore, neglect so holy a practice. — *Med.* 54.

5. Virtue cannot always hide itself ; when it appears, it attracts to itself ; and the example that one gives of it makes impressions so strong on those who see it practised or who hear it spoken of, that the majority are led to imitate it. Is this the fruit that your edifying conduct and your piety produce on your pupils ? This is the principal means you should employ to win them over to God. — *Med.* 158.

III. HAPPINESS IN VIRTUE.

1. Oh ! What happiness to serve God ! He knows how to reward those abundantly who love Him, and to raise them to a high degree of glory. — *Med.* 103.

2. Oh ! How happy you should esteem yourself to labour in the vineyard of the Lord !
— *Med.* 207.

1. Jerem. XLVIII. 10.

3. Attach yourself to God alone, in whom all happiness in this life and in the next consists. — *Med.* 35.

4. We shall be happy by belonging entirely to God, because our soul will then be occupied only with Him and with what we should do to please Him. — *Med.* 152.

5. Shall we always resist the light of grace which inspires us to leave everything for God, and that in him alone shall we find true happiness, even in this life? — *Med.* 160.

6. It is often on prompt fidelity to grace that the salvation and happiness of a soul depend. — *Med.* 96.

7. They who obey enjoy a happiness, a consolation, and an interior peace, which cannot be expressed, and which is not to be found in the same degree by anyone, except those who obey simply in view of God. — *Med.* 12.

8. It is only by means of union with your Brothers that you will acquire the peace which should constitute all the happiness of your life. — *Med.* 39.

9. Penance obtains for us pardon of our sins and prevents relapse, which is the greatest happiness we can enjoy in this world. — *Med.* 4.

10. What happiness when we are removed from the occasion of offending God! This happiness we enjoy in religion. We should fre-

quently, and even every day, thank God for this grace, since it is one of the principal means of being saved. — *Med.* 126.

11. Do you sometimes reflect on your happiness in having the Holy Ghost dwell in your body as in His temple, and that He prays in you and for you ? — *Med.* 62.

12. Receive humiliations as coming from God, and as one of the greatest honours and principal advantages that you can enjoy in this world ; it is thus that whatever may happen, you will always be pleased. — *Med.* 190.

13. If you wish to be happy, love retirement ; the more distant you are from the turmoil of the world, the more repose of mind and conscience you will have. How happy we are when our heart is detached from everything and the conscience is pure and clean ! The less we mingle with people of the world, the more we shall possess this advantage. — *Med.* 105.

14. How happy to have the advantage of suffering and dying for having laboured to gain souls to God. — *Med.* 119.

15. To know how to speak to God and commune with Him, can come only from God, who has a language of His own, and which He communicates only to His friends and intimates, whom He grants the happiness of frequently conversing with Him. — *Med.* 64.

16. Act in such a way that your days may be full, performing during your whole life such

good works as God requires of you in your profession. This is the means of being happy yourself and pleasing God. — *Med.* 146.

17. The fruit of frequent meditation is to enjoy God by anticipation as far as a lively faith can procure us this happiness. Render yourself worthy, by a holy life, to be favoured with such a grace and to possess such a happiness. — *Med.* 177.

18. Souls that are tepid, slothful and but little attached to meditation, are not intimately united to God, because they are not given to the exercise that unites souls to Him and in which one learns how to love Him and to have a foretaste of the delights of heaven. — *Med.* 18.

IV. EXAMPLES OF VIRTUE GIVEN BY ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

St. John Baptist De La Salle, whilst giving such beautiful lessons on virtue, also illustrated them by his admirable examples. As the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart, the first of which he endeavoured to sow the seed in the souls of his disciples were those which he possessed in a high degree : his modesty, humility, interior spirit, mortification, regularity, docility, charity, forgetfulness of injuries, poverty, the love of abjection and patience : virtues which were to be the foundation of the spiritual edifice which he was about to raise, the soul and spirit of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

As he wished to make of his Brothers, men of solid piety and virtue, he endeavoured to lead them to God by the will, to attach them to Him by the heart, and to make interior men of them. In order to attract them into the way in which he wished them to walk, he employed exhortation and example. He began by doing what he taught, and the shame of not imitating him, obliged the least fervent to conform to their model.





LXX

THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION

I. EXCELLENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

1. Often reflect on the end of your vocation, and let it contribute to the establishment and maintenance of the reign of God in the hearts of your pupils. — *Med.* 67.

2. It is God who by His power and special goodness, has called you to give a knowledge of the Gospel to those who have not yet received it; look upon yourselves therefore as the ministers of God. — *Med.* 140.

3. In withdrawing from the world you consecrated yourself to God to live in this community in an entire disengagement from everything which, in the world, is capable of satisfying the senses, and to make it your abode. You should consider that day as the beginning of your happiness on earth: a happiness to be one day consummated in heaven. — *Med.* 191.

4. You offered yourself to God when leaving the world. Did you then give yourself entirely to Him without reserving anything to yourself? Have you not since then recalled your offering?

You should not content yourself with having offered yourself once to your sovereign Master ; but renew your offering every day, and consecrate to Him all your actions by performing them for Him. — *Med.* 104.

5. You who have left the world, have you renounced it sincerely? Was your intention then, and is it still, never to have any relations with the world and to live in it altogether unknown? If this is the case, you are prepared to labour usefully in your employment. — *Med.* 143.

6. God having given you existence by His entirely gratuitous bounty, it is very just that, in order to show Him how much you are indebted to Him and how much you are His, you render Him the homage of your life as a thing which is absolutely His and of which you are only the depository. — *Med.* 70.

7. It is really making a sacrifice of one's life to God to employ it only for Him ; and it is this that is to be done in your profession and employment ; having no other desire than to die in it in a short time, provided you be saved and win souls to God. These will help you to reach heaven after you shall have endeavoured to save them by teaching them and making them take all possible means to reach it. It is thus that you will show Almighty God that you love Him with all your heart. — *Med.* 70.

II. ADVANTAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

1. Oh! How advantageous it is to love God! He rewards His servants even in this world; He gives pure and sweet consolations to the soul that consecrates itself to Him, and He causes those to be esteemed and honoured who delight in humiliation. The more you give to God, the more good will He do you; the more you are despised by men, the greater shall you be before God. — *Med.* 104.

2. It is inconceivable how much Our Lord loves those who leave all for Him, and how many graces He bestows on them both for themselves and for others. As their hearts are void of the things of the world, He fills them with His Holy Spirit; for, the more we exteriorly leave for Him, the more will He give us interiorly. — *Med.* 167.

3. If you thoroughly have the spirit of your state, God will make you find therein all sorts of consolations; and that, even in the most painful trials. — *Med.* 100.

4. How happy you are to have left the world! You should consider this as one of the greatest graces of your life, and thank God for it every day. — *Med.* 182.

5. It is to be in a bark with Jesus, to be in a regular community, because those who live therein, having left the world to follow Jesus, have thus placed themselves under His gui-

dance and become His disciples, and are secure from the waves of the tempestuous sea of this world, that is, from many occasions of offending God. — *Med.* 10.

III. THE OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED BY THE RELIGIOUS STATE.

1. It is especially to you that Our Lord addresses these words of the Gospel : *Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God.* ¹

2. You have the happiness of being in the house of God in whose service you have engaged yourself. You must therefore : first, be filled with grace by the exercise of mental prayer, and secondly, endeavour to practice the virtues most becoming your state. It is by these two means that you will render yourself capable of acquitting yourself well of your duty. — *Med.* 191.

3. You received great graces from God when He withdrew you from the world and called you to a ministry which takes into account only the salvation of souls ; but have you acknowledged this favour, and have you consecrated yourself to God, so as to renounce everything in order to think only of Him and of the duties of your employment ? Do so, at least from this moment, in order to be in a proper condition to exercise so holy a ministry efficiently. — *Med.* 146.

4. You who have retired from the world, should be altogether detached from human inclinations which only drag one down to earth ; you should only long for heaven and keep your mind and heart fixed there, because you are made only for heaven, you should labour only for heaven, and you will find perfect repose only in heaven. — *Med.* 40.

5. Your sanctification is the first end that you should have had in view when you entered this community, and that which retains you ; it is for this reason that we live retired from this world and oblige ourselves to all sorts of exercises of piety. How foolish if you had come to religion for any other purpose, since, as the Royal Prophet says : *Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord.*¹ As He is infinitely holy, it is very just that those who remain there should become saints by entering into participation of His sanctity. — *Med.* 55.

6. You who have withdrawn from the world in order to live a life above nature and human inclinations and in order to labour for the salvation of your neighbour, should attach yourself to God and think of Him only and of the ministry with which He has honoured you ; and thus, your whole care should be to occupy yourself only with spiritual things, and those which concern the Christian education of your pupils. — *Med.* 58.

IV. PERSEVERANCE

IN THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION.

1. They who wish to consecrate themselves to God from youth, must not be discouraged at the pains and difficulties they meet with, either to carry out their pious design, or to persevere in the path of virtue after entering upon it. — *Med.* 115.

2. It is not for some time only that you have given yourself to God, but for ever. As you have consecrated your soul to Him and as your soul is to live eternally, your devotedness to His glory should be without end; if you have begun it on earth, it is in a certain way only an apprenticeship of what you are to do eternally in heaven. — *Med.* 191.

3. Nothing renders a religious more solid and firm in his vocation than obedience, because of the respect and love it gives him for all the observances of religion, which are the assured way to possess the plenitude of the spirit of his state, and of persevering therein. And indeed, whence do defections come? Is it not because one ceases to love the Rules and practices of the community, then becomes disgusted with them, and finally only observes them with pain? — *Med.* 12.

4. I am very happy to learn of the good disposition in which you are of persevering until the end of your life in the Society, and this happiness is much increased by your

desire to return to the novitiate ; this is a sign that you have a great desire to advance in virtue, and this gives me much pleasure. — *Letters.*

V. ADMIRABLE VOCATION.

From the year 1682, when the work of the schools made its appearance as an apostolate, in proportion as the aureola of virtue points out the house occupied by St. John Baptist De La Salle as a centre of light and life, the recruitment of teachers changed its nature. The young men who presented themselves, knew that they were to devote themselves to an apostolic work, and they entered in order to live in the religious state. They came from all ranks of society ; if some were of humble condition, others belonged to families in easy circumstances, and had received a distinguished education. It was these new recruits that became the nucleus of the Institute.

All these young souls brought admirable dispositions to the community. In their first fervour they stood less in need of being stimulated than of being checked. In a short time the house of the rue Neuve was a school of heroic virtues.

The interior life was intense. From their arrival the young teachers were captivated by the penetrating words of their superior. All preoccupations of the natural order were banished from their hearts by the absorbing thought of the supernatural. They lived in the presence of God, silent, recollected ; and, taken up with the sole desire of pleasing God in their souls, they waged a desperate warfare against pride and sensuality of the flesh. — *Life*, by Guibert, Chap. II.





LXXI

ZEAL

A. — QUALITIES OF ZEAL.

I. ZEAL SHOULD BE DISINTERESTED.

1. Endeavour in your employment, to have intentions as pure and disinterested as were those of Our Lord Himself ; by this means you will draw this grace and blessing on yourself and your work. — *Med.* 196.

2. If you wish to render yourself worthy of being employed in saving souls, be detached from everything and the graces of God will descend on you with abundance, both for yourselves and for others. Say, as is written in Genesis : *Give me the persons, and the rest take to thyself,* ¹ that is, to dispose of them as Thou plearest ; for, with the exception of the love of God and the salvation of souls, all the rest should be indifferent to you. — *Med.* 187.

3. Apply yourself to your employment with all the affection of your heart and as

1. Gen. XIV. 21.

working only for the glory of God. — *Med.* 201.

4. Zeal cannot be more real and solid than when it continues to be exercised in the midst of the greatest sufferings and the most violent persecutions. — *Med.* 187.

5. Act in such a manner that by your zeal you may give evident proofs that you love those whom God has confided to you, as Jesus Christ loved His Church. Make them really enter into the structure of that sacred edifice, and enable them to worthily figure there according to the desire of Our Lord who presented *to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*¹ You will thus make known to the ages to come, the abundant riches of grace that Our Lord bestowed on your pupils by giving them the help of religious instruction, and on you, by entrusting you to educate them to be one day *heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ.*² — *Med.* 201.

6. You need much zeal in your ministry; imitate that of St. Paul in such a manner, that neither outrages, nor insults, nor calumnies, nor persecutions, no matter what they may be, may be capable of diminishing it in any respect, nor of provoking any complaint, esteeming yourself too happy to suffer for Our Lord. — *Med.* 117.

1. Ephes. V. 27.

2. Rom. XIII. 17.

II. TRUE ZEAL SHOULD BE ACTIVE.

1. The Brothers of the Institute shall strive by prayer, instruction and by their good conduct in school, to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care; bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel. — *Common Rules*, Chap. II.

The zeal that you are obliged to have in your employment should be so active and animated, that you may be able to say to the parents of the children confided to your care : *Give me the persons, and the rest take to yourselves,*¹ that is to say : We undertake to labour for the salvation of their souls, abandoning to you the temporal advantages which result for you and your children from the instruction we shall have given them. Besides, it is only for this purpose that you have engaged yourself to educate them. Act in such a manner that you may also be able to say to them what Our Lord said with regard to the sheep of whom He is the Shepherd, and who are to be saved by Him : *I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.*² — *Med.* II4.

III. TRUE ZEAL SHOULD BE ARDENT.

1. The ardent zeal that you have for the salvation of the souls of those whom you instruct

1. Gen. XIV. 21.

2. John. X. 10.

should have made you understand that you should devote yourself without reserve to the work of their Christian education, and to consecrate thereto your whole existence, so as to procure for them the life of grace in this world and life eternal in the next. — *Med.* 201.

2. You cannot doubt but that it is a great grace that God has bestowed on you in charging you with the instruction of children, announcing the Gospel to them and of bringing them up in the spirit of Christianity. But, having called you to this ministry, God requires that you acquit yourself of it with an ardent zeal for the salvation of your pupils, because it is His work. Now, God curses him who does His work with negligence. — *Med.* 201.

3. Show by your whole conduct that you look upon yourself as the minister of God in the education of youth, acquitting yourself of this employment with an ardent charity and a zeal that is as enlightened as it is true : bearing the trials that you meet with very patiently ; being satisfied to be despised by men and to be persecuted, even to desire to give your life for Jesus in the exercise of your ministry. — *Med.* 201.

IV. TRUE ZEAL SHOULD BE VIGILANT.

1. You are in an employment in which you must give your most vigilant care to oppose

the enemies both exterior and interior, that are prejudicial to the progress of your pupils in piety. — *Med.* 114.

2. Ask of God the grace of so watching over your pupils as to take all possible precautions to guarantee them against mortal transgressions. Endeavour to be such good guides in their regard, that the light which you shall have obtained from God by prayer and by your fidelity in acquitting yourself well of your duty, may so enable you to perceive everything that might be an obstacle to the good of the souls who are confided to you, that you will remove everything that might be hurtful to them or turn them from the road of heaven.

This should be your chief care of them, and the principal reason for which God has charged you with so holy a ministry ; it is also of this that God will make you render a very exact account on the day of judgment. — *Med.* 197.

3. Often exhort your pupils to avoid sin with as much promptitude as they would flee from the presence of a serpent. — *Med.* 202.

B. — THE ZEAL OF A TEACHER WILL BE PERFECT
IF HE PRACTISES WHAT HE TEACHES

1. Your zeal with regard to the children who are confided to you would be very imperfect, if you were to exercise it only by instruction ; but it will become perfect if you yourself practise what you teach them, because example makes much more impression on the mind and

heart, especially of children, than words. Not yet having the mind sufficiently developed for reflection, they generally imitate the example of their teachers; more willingly doing what they see done, than what they hear, especially when the words of their teachers are in contradiction with their conduct. — *Med.* 202.

2. If you wish that the instructions that you give to those whom you are to train to the practice of virtue, should be profitable to them, it is necessary that you practise them yourselves, and that you be filled with zeal, so that your pupils may receive the communication of the graces that are in you; that this communication may induce them to do well, and that your zeal draw down on you the spirit of God, to animate them thereto more and more by your example. — *Med.* 203.

3. Do you correspond with the designs of God on you, and do you endeavour in your state, to attain such holiness that you may be able to render those holy who are confided to you? — *Med.* 131.

C. — MOTIVES OF ZEAL

I. THE NOBLE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER SHOULD EXCITE HIS ZEAL.

1. What should urge you to have great zeal in your state, is that you are ministers of God, of Jesus Christ and of the Church. This is what St. Paul teaches, who wishes that every-

one should consider as the ministers of Jesus Christ those who announce the Gospel, and that everyone may be able to say to those whom he instructs : *You are the epistle of Jesus Christ ministered by us, and written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart.* ¹ — *Med.* 201.

2. Consider the honour done you in being employed in education, and look upon the children whom God has confided to you as the children of God Himself. Be more careful of their education and instruction that you would be of that of the children of a king.— *Med.* 133.

II. THE RESPONSABILITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER SHOULD ANIMATE HIM WITH ZEAL.

1. One of the principal motives that should animate your zeal to reprimand and correct the faults of your disciples is that, should you fail to do so, you would yourself be responsible for these faults before God, who would punish you for your carelessness and negligence with regard to your pupils ; because, being the substitute of their father and mother, and of their pastors, you are obliged to watch over them, *as being to render an account of their souls.* ²

2. You are the guardian of the flock with

1. II Cor. III, 3.

2. Heb. VIII. 17.

which God has charged you ; you are therefore obliged to watch over all those who compose it ; because, as St. Paul says, you are to render an account to God of their souls. — *Med.* 186.

D. — SOME MEANS FOR RENDERING TRUE ZEAL USEFUL
TO THE CHURCH AND TO SOULS

1. In order to render your zeal useful to others, you must in the first place exercise it within yourself and your community. For this purpose you must take care not to pardon yourself the least fault or the least thing displeasing to God, without imposing on yourself a penance capable of correcting you. You also must, through zeal for discipline, so well contribute to the maintenance of regularity in your community, that it may become a terrestrial paradise of charity and peace. — *Med.* 81.

2. You must apply yourself much to prayer in order to succeed in your ministry. Continually lay before Our Lord the wants of your pupils, exposing to Him the difficulties that you find in managing them. Our Lord, seeing that you regard Him in your employment as being able to do all things, and that you look on yourself as an instrument that should not have any movement but through Him, will not fail to grant you what you ask of Him. — *Med.* 196.

3. Exhort your pupils as if God exhorted

them by you ; since He has destined you to announce to these young souls the truths of the Gospel, and to procure for them the means of salvation adapted to them.

4. The more kind you are to the members of Jesus Christ and of the Church who are confided to you, the more will God produce in them admirable effects of grace. — *Med.* 134.

5. If, as it should be in your employment, you are full of faith and the spirit of God, you will be the cause that those whom you instruct will be true Christians, that is, not only in name, but that they will also have the spirit of Christianity and live as Christians, and will be admired for their piety. — *Med.* 134.

6. Compare what you do by the inspiration of obedience with what you do of your own movement, and look on the first as the work of God, and on the second as the labour of man. — *Med.* 57.

E. — SUFFERING IS THE REWARD IN THIS WORLD OF THE ZEAL OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

1. All the gratitude we should expect in this world for having instructed children, and above all the poor, is abuse, outrage, calumny, persecution, and death itself. This is the reward of saints and apostolic men, as it was that of Jesus Christ Himself. Do not expect any other, if you have God in view in the ministry which

He has confided to you. It is even this that should animate you to employ yourself therein with more fruit; for, the more faithful you will be to God when suffering, the more will He give you His grace and blessings in the exercise of your ministry. — *Med.* 515.

2. Be prepared to suffer insults, outrages and calumny for all the good that you shall have endeavoured to do for your neighbour; this is the principal reward that God promises in this world, and often the only one that we receive from the poor for all the good done them. Prepare your heart so that you may always receive this kind of reward with affection. — *Med.* 120.

F. — JESUS CHRIST THE PERFECT MODEL OF ZEAL

1. Jesus Christ, speaking to His Apostles, said to them: *I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also.* ¹ He wished His disciples to be present at all the conversions which He made, so that, having seen the manner in which He did so, they might regulate their conduct thereby in all that they would have to do to win souls to God.

This is also what you must do, who have been chosen among others to be His co-operators in saving souls. Apply yourself therefore, in reading the Gospel, to study the manner in which He acted, and to meditate on the means which He employed to lead His disciples to the

1. John. XIII, 15.

practice of the precepts and evangelical counsels.

Now He proposes to them to reckon among the beatitudes everything of which the world has the greatest horror, such as poverty, insults, affronts, calumny, and all sorts of persecution for justice' sake. He even tells them that they should be filled with joy when they would be persecuted.

Again, in order to inspire them with horror for sin into which men have the habit of falling, He proposes to them the practice of the opposite virtues, such as meekness, humility, and so on.

And, in order to make them know the perfection to which they were called, he sometimes said to them : *Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who concerned themselves only with outward observances, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*¹ Finally, he wished that the rich and those who have their pleasures in this world, should be looked upon by them as wretched.

It is according to these maxims and teachings of Jesus Christ that you must instruct the youths confided to your care. — *Med.* 196.

2. Consider Our Lord in the Gospel of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep, places it on His shoulders, and brings it back to the fold ; and, as you hold His place, consider your-

self obliged to act in the same manner ; ask of Him, consequently, the graces necessary to bring about the conversion of the hearts of your disciples. — *Med.* 196.

VIII. ADMIRABLE ZEAL OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

St. John Baptist De La Salle lived only for God, sought but the exaltation of His holy name and the multiplication of His servants. His only desire was to see Him known, loved and served. He took delight only in seeking and finding means to cause Him to be blessed and honoured, and in winning hearts over to Him. He would have been only moderately happy if he had seen all mankind united in the true religion and submissive to the yoke of the faith. His joy would have been complete if he had seen them all live like saints. His desire to this effect was so great, that he looked upon the loss of his repose, of his reputation and of his goods as a gain, when these sacrifices contributed to the increase of the reign of God. In the ardour of his zeal, he would have wished to multiply himself indefinitely in order to embrace the universe, and win over for Our Lord perfect servants, capable of adoring in spirit and in truth. He did not reckon with pain or trouble when there was question of the service of our divine Master, and every moment of his life found him disposed to sacrifice Himself to extend His glory. Hence His holy zeal for the decoration of churches, the dressing of altars, the magnificence of vases and sacred vestments : hence, his noble passion to see everything in connection with the worship of God and religion, becoming and suitably majestic. Hence his grief when he reflected how much God is offended in the world, how few true adorers there are, with what tepidity He is served by those who are regarded as the most faithful.

He had the glory of God so much at heart, that he wished to become its victim and perpetual zelator in

obliging himself with his disciples to procure it with all their power. It was on this that he founded the formula of vows that he drew up for his community, and which he was the first to pronounce at the foot of the altar, with a taper in his hand, at the head of the Brothers, with a devotion that manifested in his countenance the ardour of his soul. This is how he begins : *Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, prostrate with the most profound respect before Thy infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself to Thee to procure Thy glory as far as I am able and as Thou wilt require of me.* — *Spirit and Virtues*, Chap. XVI.





PRAYERS DURING HOLY MASS¹

(St John Baptist De La Salle.)

BEFORE HOLY MASS

My Saviour Jesus Christ, I am going to hear Mass for the purpose of honoring Thee and of thanking Thee for Thy benefits, particularly for dying for me. It is also for the purpose of begging the graces which I need, especially the pardon of my sins. Grant, I beseech Thee, that, during the time of this holy Sacrifice, my mind, entering into the intentions of the Church and of the Priest, may be occupied only with Thee, and that I may not forget what Thou didst suffer for me on Mount Calvary.

AT THE BEGINNING OF HOLY MASS

An Act of Humility.

How can I dare, O my God, to appear before Thee, I, who am but a miserable crea-

1. These prayers are taken from a work entitled *Instructions et prières pour la sainte Messe*, par Messire Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, prêtre et instituteur des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes. (Edition de 1785, reproduisant le manuscrit approuvé en Sorbonne le 16 janvier 1704. — Archives de l'Institut.)

ture? Thou art all, and I am nothing; Thou hast all, and I have nothing; Thou canst do all, and I can do nothing.

I know what I shall do to supply for my indigence; I shall unite myself to Thee to be all in Thee; I shall give myself to Thee to possess all with Thee; I shall annihilate myself in Thee, in order to do all through Thee. It is thus, O my God, that, no longer having anything of myself, I may present myself to Thee as something agreeable to Thee, and I shall give Thee what I shall have received from Thee.

An Act of Confusion.

How confused I am, O my God, to approach Thee and Thy holy altar; being, as I am, filled with sin! Sin was born with me, and the crimes that I have committed, have multiplied with my advancement in age. Dissipate all the malice of my heart by Thy light and grace, so that I may be fit to assist at the Sacrifice of Thy Son.

An Act of Contrition.

We may recite the *Confiteor* with the server with sentiments of contrition, or make the following act:

I beseech Thee, O my God, to grant me pardon for my sins, and I present them to Thee that Thou mayest destroy them. It is by the Sacrifice of Thy Son on the Cross that Thou hast already delivered us from them; the sacrifice which is about to be offered to Thee

is the same, and has the same power and efficacy. Grant me, I beseech Thee, through its virtue, absolution from all my sins. I offer it to Thee in anticipation with this intention, in union with the priest, and I beg this grace from Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ, and through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin, the Angels and all the Saints.

When the priest says the *Indulgentiam*, we must place ourselves in the disposition, as far as possible, to receive absolution of all our sins.

An Act of Confidence.

I trust, O my God, that Thou hast restored the life of my soul by pardoning me my sins, and it is with this view that I approach Thy holy altar in thought and heart, in order to render Thee my homage, and to offer Thee, with a soul as pure as possible, a sacrifice of praise, the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ Thy Son.

AT THE INTROIT

An Act of Adoration.

I adore, O my God, Thy infinite greatness and sovereign majesty. The Angels tremble before Thee ; all creatures are nothing in Thy presence, and the continual change which they undergo is an homage which they render to Thy infinite power over them, and to Thy essence which is always the same.

O my God, how great and admirable Thou

art in Thyself and in all that Thou dost ! It is the sacrifice we owe Thee to acknowledge Thy elevation, the greatness and lustre of Thy admirable name, and to annihilate ourselves before Thee.

AT THE KYRIE ELEISON

An Act to implore the mercy of God.

POUR forth upon us Thy mercy, O my God ; it is with humility that we beg it of Thee and in union with Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who asked it for us on Calvary, and who continues to ask it for us in this Sacrifice.

AT THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Acts of praise and thanksgiving.

O my God, who givest Thy peace to men of good will, we render Thee the glory which is due to Thee. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we give Thee thanks for all the benefits with which Thou hast filled the earth. It is Thou who hast sent Thy only Son to deliver all men, from their sins ; grant us the grace to blot out ours and thus to hear our prayer ; we ask it of Thee most earnestly through the merits of the same Jesus Christ Thy Son, who, being the same God with Thee, is as holy, as great and powerful as Thou, and who possesses the same glory as Thou with the Holy Ghost.

AT THE *DOMINUS VOBISCUM*

MAY Thy spirit always be with us.

AT THE COLLECT

O my God, who ardently desirest our salvation and incessantly givest us the means to attain it, grant me for this purpose the grace to practise all that Thou hast taught us by Thy Prophets, Thy Apostles, or by Thyself, so that, having lived according to Thy holy doctrine and the laws of the holy Gospel, I may assure to myself, by means of the good works that I shall have done, the possession of the glory which Thou hast promised us. This is what I beg of Thee through Jesus Christ Our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

AT THE EPISTLE

O my God, who hast announced to us through Thy holy Prophets what was to happen in the law of grace, and who has taught us by Thy holy Apostles, the rules and maxims of a Christian life, grant me to understand the holy mysteries hidden in the Prophets, and which Jesus Christ Our Lord accomplished in His person. Grant me also the grace of understanding with submission of mind what Thou hast taught us by Thy holy Apostles, to relish the practical truths with

which their Epistles are filled, and to regulate my life and conduct by the instructions they give us.

I adore every word contained in both, as Thy divine word, of which they are but the organ and ministers; I receive them with respect, I submit to them with sentiments of humility and gratitude, and I am disposed, with the help of Thy grace, to accomplish them with the utmost fidelity.

AT THE GRADUAL

THY word and Thy law, O my God, shall, day and night, be the subject of my reflections; I shall take pleasure in often thinking of them, I shall consider how great Thy goodness has been to me, how many graces I have received from Thee, and consequently, how faithful I should be to observe what Thou commandest me. Thy law is a yoke; but it is a yoke which is sweet, and a burden which is light.

Behold, O my mind, and taste, O my heart, how sweet the Lord is and how amiable!

AT THE GOSPEL

THIS, O my God, is not only Thy word, it is Thy law, it is the rule of all Christians; I adore it in Thee, I listen to it with respect, I firmly believe it; it is Thyself that hast published it; it is Thy holy Apostles that have written it, inspired by Thy Spirit; and it is I, O my God, who should practise it.

I thank Thee for having given me so excellent a doctrine to be the guide and rule of my conduct. I shall read it, I shall meditate on it, and I shall not be ashamed to observe what it teaches most contrary to the maxims of the world; and, provided that I be assisted by Thy grace, I shall endeavour to practise it during the whole course of my life.

AT THE *CREDO*

A profession of faith.

I believe that there is but one God, and that there cannot be more.

I believe that there are three persons in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that these three persons are one only God.

I believe that the Son of God, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, became man and died on the cross for our sins.

I believe that they who die in the state of grace shall be eternally happy in heaven, in seeing God as He is.

I believe that they who die in the state of mortal sin shall be damned; that is, that they shall never see God, and that they will burn eternally in hell.

I believe that it suffices to have committed a single mortal sin, and to die in this state to be condemned.

I believe that there are ten Commandments of God, and that we are obliged to observe

them all, and that we are also obliged to observe the Commandments of the Church.

I believe that it is necessary to have frequent recourse to prayer and to pray with attention and piety.

I believe that there are seven sacraments : Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

I believe that Baptism effaces original sin and makes us Christians ; that Penance remits the sins committed after Baptism ; that the Holy Eucharist really and substantially contains the body, the soul and the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine.

AT THE OFFERTORY

The offering of our body and senses.

RECEIVE, O my God, the oblation which I make to Thee in union with the priest, of the bread which is to be changed into the sacred body of Jesus Christ ; bless it, we beseech Thee. Receive also the offering which I make to Thee of my body and senses, and grant me the grace to make a holy use of them ; give my body the purity so much loved by Thy dear Son. Regulate my senses in such a way that if I see, or hear, or eat, or drink, or speak, it may be in submission to Thy holy will, and without offending Thee, and that

I may thus put in practice the words of the Apostle : “ Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God. ” ¹

The offering of our soul, of our thoughts and our affections.

I offer Thee, O my God, in union with the whole Church, the wine that is soon to become the precious blood of Thy Son. I also offer Thee my soul, my thoughts, my sentiments and my affections ; grant that my soul may apply itself only to what regards my salvation ; that my thoughts may be to know Thee and to fulfil the duties of my state ; that my sentiments may be conformable to what is contained in the holy Gospel, and that my affections may be to love Thee and to be pleasing to Thee in all things.

AT THE LAVABO

A prayer to ask for purity of heart.

PURIFY me, O my God, from the least sins which may still stain my conscience ; wash me for this effect in the blood of the Lamb, so that I may be in such purity of heart that nothing may prevent me from participating in this holy sacrifice, and thereby receiving Thy graces and blessings in abundance.

1. Cor. X. 31.

AT THE OBLATION WHICH THE PRIEST MAKES
TO THE BLESSED TRINITY

I unite myself, O most holy and adorable Trinity, to the priest who offers all that is prepared for the sacrifice, and, uniting myself thus to him, I offer Thee all there is in me of good or evil; the evil, that Thou mayest destroy it by the efficacy of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ; the good, that Thou mayest render it exempt from all imperfection by the virtue of His Resurrection, and that, by the grace of His glorious Ascension, Thou mayest lead me to perfection.

AT THE *ORATE FRATRES*

I beseech Thee, O my God, to accept that which the priest has offered to Thee, to serve as a sacrifice, as well as the offering that I made Thee of myself and of all there is in me; be pleased to make of them but one sacrifice, and to consummate mine by the virtue of that of Jesus Christ.

AT THE SECRET

THE things which the priest and the faithful have just offered Thee are no longer profane or for common use. Sanctify them, O my God; separate them from the rest of creatures, and do not any more regard them but as things that are entirely Thine.

Grant me, O my God, the same grace; render me holy by the sanctity of my actions;

grant that I may separate myself entirely from a corrupted world and from everything that is sin, and consecrate me entirely to Thy service.

AT THE PREFACE

O my God, it suffices to be a Christian, who should be animated with Thy spirit, to have His heart always raised to Thee; but my weakness is so great that it is necessary that I should be often reminded of Thee during these holy mysteries.

It is very just, O my God, that I should think of Thee and praise Thee. Still, I cannot, of myself, give Thee the praise that becomes Thee, nor render Thee worthy thanks. It is in Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ alone that I can do so. The Angels, however elevated in glory, do not praise or adore Thee but in Him and through Him. It is therefore, through Jesus Christ, and in union with these blessed spirits that I beseech Thee to vouchsafe that I may say to Thee with the most profound respect : Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord, the God of hosts; the heavens and earth are full of Thy glory.

AT THE *TE IGITUR*

ETERNAL Father, I beseech Thee through Jesus Christ, who is the Mediator between Thee and ourselves, especially in this sacrifice, to accept that which the Priest continues to offer Thee, and the prayers which I address

to Thee. I ask of Thee, for the holy Church, that Thou wouldst always conduct and govern her by Thy Spirit; for our Holy Father the Pope, for our Bishop, and for all those who have the faith and live in communion with the Church, to give them the grace of their state, and to fill them with Thy blessings.

AT THE MEMENTO FOR THE LIVING

O my God, Thou dost grant to all thy faithful the grace of being members of one body, and of receiving life and influence from Jesus Christ, who is its head; Thou dost even wish that we should have great union of heart and pray for one another; it is in obedience to this command that, without regard to my sins, I pray to Thee for my parents, my superiors, for those who have procured, or shall procure my salvation in any way whatever, or from whom I have received any benefit, and for all who are present at this sacrifice, and I ask of Thee for them and for myself all the graces that we stand in need of.

AT THE *COMMUNICANTES*

It is very just, O my God, that the Saints who are in heaven should unite with us in praying to Thee, since they form but one Church with us; they should interest themselves in our sanctification, procure for us the means of attaining it and ask it of Thee for us;

they should enter into participation of all the holy actions performed by all the faithful, so that they may be more agreeable to Thee, and praise Thee, adore Thee, and offer Thee this sacrifice with them. I therefore beseech the Most Blessed Virgin, Mother of Jesus Christ Thy Son, St. John the Baptist, the Apostles Saints Peter, Paul and John, the holy Popes, the holy Martyrs and all the Saints, to obtain Thy graces and blessings for me and the whole Church.

AT THE *HANC IGITUR*

O my Saviour Jesus, who, by the words of the Priest art about to change the bread into Thy Body, and the wine into Thy blood, change me also entirely by Thy grace; destroy my passions, make me quit my bad inclinations, and grant that I may have no other affections than to love to do what Thou commandest me. This is the change that I beseech Thee to effect in me by the virtue of this holy Sacrifice.

AN ACT OF ADORATION

AT THE ELEVATION OF THE HOST

O my Saviour Jesus Christ, I adore Thy sacred Body, present on the holy Altar. It is through an effect of Thy omnipotence and goodness that we possess so great a treasure; I am filled with gratitude for this grace, and I thank Thee for it. Grant that, by the conduct of my life, I may correspond with Thy designs

in my regard, and render myself worthy of the gift that Thou dost make me of Thyself in this sacrifice.

AN ACT OF ADORATION

AT THE ELEVATION OF THE CHALICE

O my Saviour Jesus, who hast shed Thy precious Blood on the cross for our sins, I adore this same Blood, which is now on the holy altar; and I beseech Thee, through the merits which Thou hast acquired for us, and through the pure intentions which Thou hadst in shedding it, to give me true contrition and the pardon of my sins.

AT THE *UNDE ET MEMORES*

My Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast accomplished the mysteries of Thy sufferings and death, of Thy resurrection and Thy ascension into heaven, only that they might produce in us the effects proper to them; grant, by the merits of Thy sufferings and death, that I may die entirely to sin and to everything displeasing to Thee; that, by the virtue of Thy resurrection, I may not seek and relish but the things of heaven and which relate to the good of my soul; and that, by Thy glorious ascension, I may always rise from virtue to virtue, and may be at rest only when in the full enjoyment of Thy holy love.

AT THE *SUPRA QUÆ*

I hope, O my Saviour, that Thou wilt grant me this grace by means of this sacrifice which Thou Thyself offerest by means of the Priest ; for, it is infinitely greater than that of Abel, more perfect than that of the Patriarch Abraham, and infinitely more agreeable to God than that offered to Him by the High Priest Melchisedec.

AT THE *SUPPLICES TE ROGAMUS*

SINCE it is Thou who hast redeemed us by Thy Blood, and alone hast been found worthy of opening the book and breaking the seven seals with which it was closed, be pleased Thyself to present this sacrifice to the Eternal Father, because it is only Thou who art worthy to do so ; beseech Him to consummate this Sacrifice, which will then produce in us an abundance of graces, and draw down on us all the blessings of heaven.

AT THE MEMENTO FOR THE DEAD

THE whole Church, O my God, should participate in this Sacrifice ; thus, after all the saints who are in heaven have joined us in offering it to Thee, we should pray to Thee for the suffering souls in Purgatory. I pray to Thee, therefore, for the souls of my relatives, my friends and benefactors, for all those who are recommended to my prayers, and for those

who are the most abandoned. Grant them, O my God, a holy and eternal rest.

AT THE *NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS*

BUT I, O my God, who have so much offended Thee, being unworthy of Thy graces, yet have great confidence in Thy mercy. Grant that all Thy saints may ask it of Thee for me, since all Thy pleasure consists in pardoning ; and grant me, through their intercession, to enter, after my death, into participation of their glory.

AT THE *PER IPSUM*

It is only through Jesus Christ that I can hope for this happiness, it is He alone who has merited it by His death, as it is He alone to whom Thou canst not refuse anything that He asks ; it is also by Him and in Him that the glory which is due to Thee is, and shall be rendered to Thee by all the Saints in heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory, world without end. Amen.

AT THE *PATER NOSTER*

I would not dare, O my God, to call Thee my Father, after committing so many sins, if Jesus Christ Thy Son had not Himself commanded us to do so. It is therefore in obedience to Him, and through the confidence I have in Thy goodness, that I take the liberty of saying : Our Father, etc.

AT THE *LIBERA NOS QUÆSUMUS*

How happy we are to possess true peace ! It is in union of mind and heart with Thee, O my God, in exemption from sin and in peace of conscience, that peace is found. Grant me this peace, banish sin from me, and grant that my heart may always be in peace, and that it be so convinced that Thy will is done in all things, that nothing may be capable of troubling or disquieting me, because I shall not wish anything but what will please Thee. This grace I beg of Thee through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin, of the holy Apostles, Peter, Paul and Andrew, and of all the Saints.

AT THE *AGNUS DEI* AND *DOMINE QUI DIXISTI*

O my God, after having asked for peace with Thee, vouchsafe that I ask it also with my neighbour, since I shall not be well united to Thee, except inasmuch as I shall be united in affection with men. I cannot however have this union except by means of meekness and patience. Grant me, I beseech Thee, these two virtues, and that I may speak and act with affability with everyone ; that I may suffer with patience and for the love of Thee, the wrongs, insults and affronts I may meet with ; that I may not only not take offence at anything, but may be reconciled to everything that may happen to me from others.

ACT FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

LORD, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof ; but say only the word and my soul shall be healed.

O my Saviour Jesus, since I am not in a proper state to receive Thy sacred Body, as often as I assist at the Holy Mass, grant me the effects of this Sacrament, and the grace of participating in Thy Spirit, so that I may act only by it and be conducted only by its movements. I renounce my own spirit and my own light. I do not wish to follow them in anything, but submit myself entirely to Thine.

AT THE POSTCOMMUNION

O my God, since I have to-day had the happiness of being present at, and participating in the Sacrifice of Thy Son, grant me as the fruit of so holy a mystery the grace of continuing to offer Thee sacrifice this day, either by depriving myself of some pleasure or suffering some pain for love of Thee, so that, having endeavoured to offer Thee a perpetual sacrifice during this life, I may be able to offer Thee an eternal one in the next. This is the grace which I beg of Thee through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

AT THE *PLACÉAT*

ACCEPT, O my God, the sacrifice which the

Priest has just offered Thee, and that which I have offered Thee of myself; grant that both may be of advantage to me; accept also the homage of servitude which I render Thee, and which I wish to continue to render Thee during the rest of my life.

Then we dispose ourselves by a sentiment of profound humility to receive the blessing of the Priest.

AT THE LAST GOSPEL

DIVINE Word, who art in God, and God Himself from all eternity, it is by Thee that all things have been made, and it is Thou who hast given them being and life.

How great has been Thy goodness in coming into the world to enlighten men, who were in ignorance and sin! And yet the greater number have been so miserable as not to wish to receive the light, but to remain in darkness; they neither understood nor wished to listen to the holy truths which Thou didst announce to them; and though Thou wast always among them, yet, they did not know Thee.

Happy they who, not having listened to flesh and blood nor the discourses of men, but the voice of grace, received Thee well and believed in Thee, because they have become the children of God.

Do not permit, O Incarnate Word, that I imitate the example of those who did not wish to recognize Thee. Enlighten me by

Thy light, render me docile to Thy word : grant that I may confess in heart and by word of mouth, with those who have believed in Thee, that Thou art the Word made flesh. and who has dwelt among us, to give us grace and to instruct us in the truth.

AFTER HOLY MASS

My Saviour Jesus Christ, I give Thee thanks for the grace which Thou hast to-day granted me of assisting at the Holy Mass and for all those which I have received from Thy bounty. I beg pardon of Thee for the faults that I have committed, and I beseech Thee to grant me through the merits of this holy sacrifice all the necessary help that I may not offend Thee during the day, and that I may serve Thee with fidelity the remainder of my life.



AN ACT OF CONTRITION AND OF FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT
(St. John Baptist De La Salle.)

O good Jesus, sweet Saviour of my soul, I beg pardon of Thee from the bottom of my heart for all the sins that I have committed against Thy divine Majesty. Alas! my God, Thou hast loved me so much as to shed the last drop of Thy precious Blood for so miserable a creature. Ah! grant that I may not lose the fruit of this precious Blood, but rather die than commit a single sin against Thee, who art infinite goodness.

O Jesus, my Saviour and my God, I extremely regret all the sins of my past life; I would rather die than offend Thee again. Have pity on me, and grant me pardon; I beg this grace of Thee, O my God, through the infinite merits of Thy most dear Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

AN ACT OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR LORD
(St. John Baptist De La Salle.)

I offer Thee, O my Saviour Jesus Christ, all the pains and torments which it pleased Thee to suffer in dying on the cross for me, to satisfy the justice of Thy heavenly Father for my sins, which I hide in Thy sacred wounds, to be there consumed in the burning furnace of Thy divine love.

PRAYERS FOR HOLY COMMUNION
(St. John Baptist De La Salle.)

BEFORE COMMUNION ¹

AN ACT OF FAITH

FAITH alone, O my Saviour Jesus, is my guide in this sacred mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, and it is it alone, which, guiding my mind in simple submission to the word of God, makes it acknowledge before all the angels and saints, that the God of my heart and of my hope is hidden under these appearances. The faith with which my mind is animated obliges me to say, O my Jesus, that it is Thou Thyself. I do not understand, but I believe it. Thou art here acting in us and for us without any exterior action that is apparent; but Thou givest us sensible marks of Thy love, and we find in this sacrament the epitome and abstract of all Thy wonders. I confess and believe simply and without examination, and this is all I can say to Thee.

1. The four following considerations are easily made before Holy Communion in order to prepare your heart fittingly for so holy an action. The first is : What am I about to do ? The second is : Who am I compared with God ? The third is : Why and for what end do I wish to approach the altar to receive Him ? The fourth is : How and for what purpose should I receive Holy Communion to-day ? — *Collection.*

AN ACT OF ADORATION

O my Saviour Jesus, Thou art as adorable in this sacrament as Thou art in heaven; Thou art also as amiable as Thou wast on earth; I do not see Thee in the adorable sacrament, but I know that Thou art there, and I adore Thee there. The Angels, all penetrated with the glory which Thou dost possess in Thy Sacrament, descend from heaven to prostrate themselves before Thee, making Thy abode in this incomprehensible mystery. Permit me, though so great a sinner, to join with them and to acknowledge with them, in the simplicity of faith, that everything is adorable in Thee in this sacred mystery. It is there that Thou dost unite greatness and lowliness, elevation with humiliation, God with the creature, in a word, so many things so little in harmony, that all that I can do is to say with humility and submission of mind : I believe and adore.

AN ACT OF HUMILITY AND OF CONFIDENCE

DIVINE Jesus, who dost urge me strongly to receive Thee, shall I say to Thee with the centurion : Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst strip Thyself of Thy glory and present Thyself to me, for I am not worthy that under any circumstances or in any manner whatever Thou shouldst come to me? Or shall I say to Thee with St. Peter : Depart from me, for I am a sinful man? Shall I then refuse the favour

Thou wishest to do me, because Thou dost not find in me anything worthy of Thee? I know, O my Saviour, that I should do it, were I to consider only what I am; but in view of Thy infinite goodness and tenderness for me, I prefer to anticipate Thee like Martha and Mary Magdalen, and with them, say to Thee : If Thou hadst been here sooner, my soul had not died. I shall moreover say more than they : Give new life to my soul, since Thou art the resurrection and the life ; and since it is true that Thou comest to us only to give us the life of grace in abundance, give me also such a plenitude of grace, that it may render my soul impenetrable to the assaults of sin, and that whatever inclination I have had for it, may hereafter be far removed from me by the firmness of my will not to commit it again.

AN ACT OF LOVE

O Bread of life, I approach Thee to receive Thee with confidence, believing that Thou wilt vivify my mind, strengthen my heart, give joy to my soul, purify my flesh and entirely change me ; for, I will not change Thee into myself but Thou wilt transform me into Thyself. O sweet Saviour, increase my confidence, so that I may be worthy of obtaining Thy sovereign promise. O my Jesus, who art the way, the truth and the life, show me the way that I must follow to go to Thee, enlighten my mind that I may know all the truths that I

should firmly believe. Thou art the blessed life of which I should live, and the way I should follow; I approach Thee to receive Thee for this end; be my life to render me immortal, reigning with Thee throughout all ages.

ACT OF DESIRE

O my God, enter into my soul and purify it; O my God, remain in me and let me remain in Thee. Sweet Jesus, my Saviour, sweet Virgin Mary, I offer you my heart, I offer you my life. O my God, I adore Thee with my whole heart, with my whole soul, and with all my strength, because Thou art my Saviour and glorifier.

Behold, O my soul, the Lord thy God, behold Him whom thou desirest: how happy wilt thou be if thou know Him and beseech Him to remain with thee!

AFTER COMMUNION

AN ACT OF UNION

WHENCE this happiness, that my Saviour and my God should have come to me! Blessed be He who hath come to visit me without any merit on my part.

Burn, O consuming Fire, all that Thou seest in me that is unworthy of Thy presence or that may be an obstacle to Thy grace.

O my most amiable Saviour, allow me to

enter in spirit into the glorious wounds of Thy precious Body, and since Thou dost dwell with them in me, I wish there to make the dwelling of my soul, uniting myself to Thee in the most perfect bond of love.

My Jesus and my God, say to me as Thou didst once say to Zaccheus, that salvation is come to this house.

AN ACT OF LOVE

WHAT happiness for me, O my God, to have received Thee and to possess Thee, who hast in Thyself all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God, and in whom dwells the plenitude of the Divinity. It is Thy sacred Body that I have just received; Thou hast given it to me only to replenish me with grace and to induce me to live in a manner worthy of Thee. May my whole mind be occupied with thee, and may my whole pleasure consist in filling my heart with Thy holy love.

AN ACT OF PETITION

I thank Thee, O my Saviour, for having given me this day Thy sacred Body for my food. It is a heavenly bread which gives me strength to resist temptations and to avoid falling into sin. It is a meat of the divinity itself which preserves life and gives taste to apply one's self above all things to the service of God. It is a medicine capable of curing all the diseases of the soul. Grant, O my Saviour,

that this sacred bread may restore to me the strength destroyed by sin ; grant that this meat may keep up the life of my soul, by preserving Thy holy grace and the desire of serving Thee, and that this medicine may be so salutary to me as to leave no sin in me, or any affection for what is displeasing to Thee.

AN ACT OF HUMILITY AND OF THANKSGIVING

My Saviour and my God, I most humbly ask Thy pardon for the indevotion and irreverence with which I have presented myself to receive Thee.

I beseech Thee to apply to me and to the Holy Church, the fruit of this divine sacrifice and of the Holy Communion.

I thank Thee, O my God, for being pleased to be received by me, to have come to me, Thy poor creature and unprofitable servant. Remain with me, my sweet Jesus, until the consummation of ages. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN AND TO THE SAINTS

Most Holy Virgin, Immaculate Mother of Jesus, whom I have had the happiness of receiving in Holy Communion, and you all, blessed spirits who keep Him company in this sacrament of love, I most humbly beseech you with all the saints, especially those who had the greatest devotion to this ineffable mystery

to thank Him for me for the infinite grace He bestowed on me in coming to me to heal and nourish my poor soul and to replenish me with all His gifts. Beseech Him, I beg of you, that it may be thus, and that I may not be so unfortunate as ever to banish Him therefrom by sin.





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